

1991

# Language, music and the struggle for political and socio-economic change (The case of Dominica, 1974-1978).

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**LANGUAGE, MUSIC  
AND THE  
STRUGGLE FOR POLITICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGE  
(The Case of Dominica 1974-1978)**

by  
Steinberg D. Henry

**A Thesis  
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research  
through the Department of Communication Studies in  
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Arts at the  
University of Windsor  
Windsor, Ontario, Canada  
1991.**



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**ABSTRACT**

**LANGUAGE, MUSIC**

**AND THE**

**STRUGGLE FOR POLITICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGE**

(The Case of Dominica 1974-1978)

The Commonwealth Caribbean is comprised of thirteen countries that were former colonies of England and France. The thirteen include Belize in Central America and Guyana in South America. The colonies in the Caribbean began to advance to political and economic independence as England gradually relinquished its position as the metropolitan centre of the world. Trinidad and Tobago attained its independence in 1962, and Jamaica and Barbados in 1962 and 1966 respectively. The other countries of the Caribbean were to follow suit in the 1970s and 1980s.

The context within which independence was attained in the 1970s indicated instability: world inflation, rising costs of fuel, unemployment, slow growth, indebtedness and massive balance of payments deficits. It was also out of this context that a cultural resurgence was being experienced. This thesis intends to trace the contribution of two forms of musical expression - Calypso and Cadence-lypso (Kadans) - and the extent to which they traced, and were part of the upheavals which accompanied Dominica's advance to independence.

Kadans particularly, brought a sense of self-esteem to the majority Kwéyòl-speaking population. Through the use of the popular language in its lyrics, Kadans effected changes in the all-English content of national radio, challenging the one-way transmission practice of communication operational in the colonies in the 1970s. Calypso provided the people with an interpretation of the real occurrences in government.

This thesis intends to provide a framework for future researchers in the Caribbean concerned about the role of popular song in political and economic change. I suggest that

communication research be no longer restricted to the effects tradition, where *senders* design messages out of their own specificity to satisfy receivers without the *receivers* being contributors to the message. Caribbean societies are predominantly oral societies and the oral tradition has a long history which should be taken into account when communication research is being conducted. It is also hoped that the study of development will not be restricted to infrastructural expansion, but will consider the values and aspirations of any developing society.



## **DEDICATION**

This Thesis is dedicated

to you

**Jeanne**

silent, patient one,

how I've listened to your music

shroud the night of political events!

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the assistance of Marcel Fontaine who worked so patiently with me on a few of the translations from Kwéyòl into English. Special thanks to Philbert Alleyne for providing the Calypsos for the period 1974-78, and Reggie Blanchard for the 1990-91 collection. Thanks to Fitzroy, Chubby, Ency, Spencer, Robin, Chris, Ophelia, Mark, Felix, Duncan, Ray, Pat, Xiaoping, Springfield Trading, The Dominica Broadcasting Corporation, Cable and Wireless (Dominica), The House of Assembly in Dominica, the New Chronicle Staff, The Contact Staff, Tony Bourne, Trevor Marshall, Patrick John and the faculty at the University of Windsor. Special mention must be made of the thesis Committee Chair, Dr. Amir Hassanpour, the Committee members, Dr. Marlene Cuthbert and Dr. Bernie Harder. Thanks to Dr. Irv Goldman, Dr. Kai Hildebrandt and Professor Hugh Edmunds. Merci to a special friend and teacher, Dr. Christopher King.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	iv
DEDICATION .....	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	vi
LIST OF TABLES AND ILLUSTRATIONS .....	x
MAP 1 .....	xi
PREFACE .....	xii
MAP 2 .....	xiii
DEFINITIONS .....	xx
 <b>CHAPTER</b>	
<b>1. LANGUAGE, MUSIC, CULTURE .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Arawaks, Caribs, the Spanish and French .....	2
English, Africans and Plantation Society .....	4
Cultural Practices of Dominican People .....	6
Significance of Project .....	11
Theoretical Framework/Literature Review .....	12
Goals of Research Project .....	16
Methodology .....	17
Summary and Conclusion .....	19
 <b>2. POLITICS AND CULTURE .....</b>	 <b>21</b>
Functions of Kadans and Calypso .....	22
Functions of Popular Song .....	28
Rastafari/Dread and Intellectuals .....	29
The Dread Act and Lyrica; Responses .....	33
Summary and Conclusion .....	46
 <b>3. ECONOMICS AND CULTURE .....</b>	 <b>48</b>
The Rural-Urban Dichotomy .....	49
Lyrics Beneath the Surface .....	56
Summary and Conclusion .....	69

4.	COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE . . . . .	72
	Radio Breaking Away . . . . .	78
	Censoring the Popular Song . . . . .	89
	Summary and Conclusion . . . . .	96
5.	DOMINICA, THE 1970S AND BEYOND . . . . .	99
	Dominica After Patrick John . . . . .	100
	Caribs, Dreads and Intellectuals . . . . .	101
	Political Economy and Communication . . . . .	108
	Looking Ahead: Conclusion . . . . .	120
	LIST OF REFERENCES . . . . .	122
	TABLE . . . . .	136
	VITA AUCTORIS . . . . .	137

## TABLES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

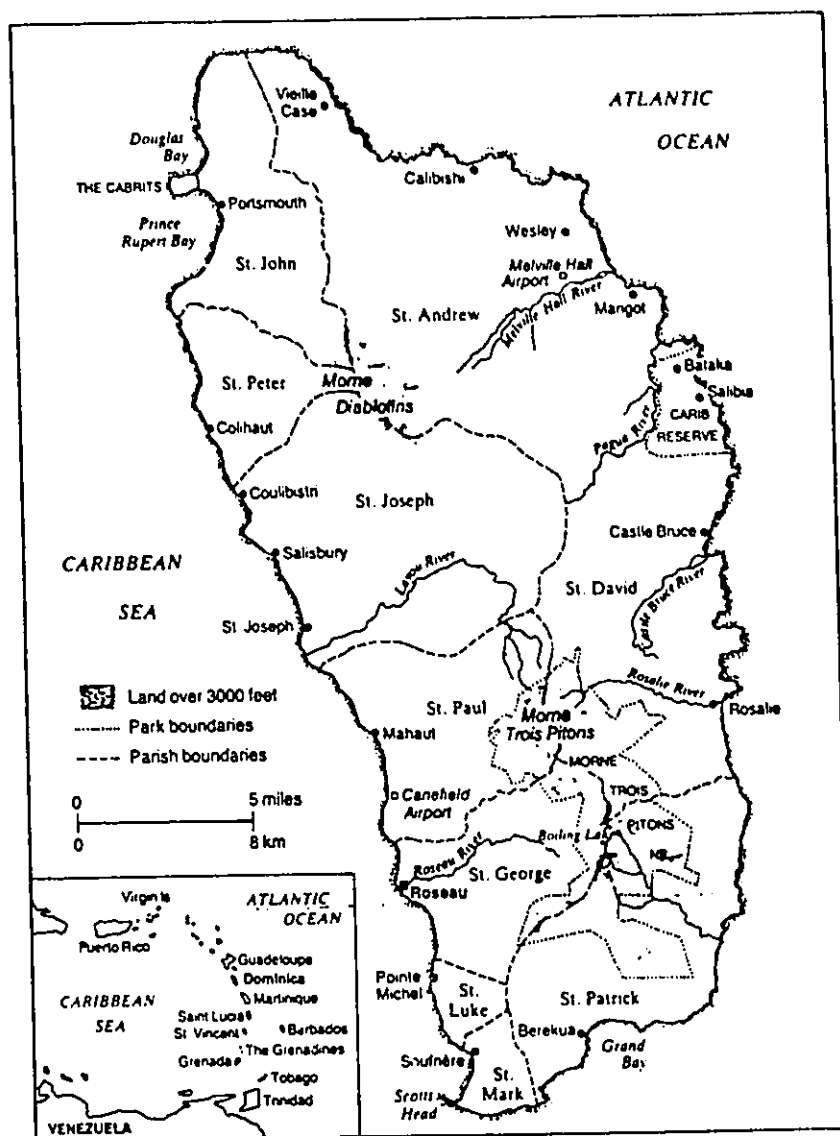
### List of Tables

1. Principal Domestic Exports . . . . . 136

### List of Illustrations

1. Arts and Culture: Calypso and Resistance . . . . . 23
2. Map 1 - Dominica . . . . . xi
3. Map 2 - Kwéyòl-speaking areas . . . . . xiii

Map of Dominica (1)



Source: Robert A. Myers. *Dominica*. Oxford: CLIO Press, 1987. p. 191.

This map was originally published in the *Dominica* volume of the *World Bibliographical Series* which was compiled by Robert A. Myers (Oxford, England, Clio Press; Santa Barbara, ABC-Clio: 1987) and is reproduced here by the kind permission of Clio Press.

## PREFACE

Dominica, a 305 square mile island with a population of 81,636 (1987) is situated between the French departments of Martinique to the South and Guadeloupe to the North. A population of 20,501 live in Dominica's capital, Roseau. Roseau is the seat of government and centre of commerce, manufacturing, industry, banking and education. The language of administration and business is predominantly English.

Portsmouth, Dominica's second town and heart of the huckstering trade, is in the North of the island.<sup>1</sup> From as early as 1952 that trade has been fed by the agriculturally lucrative villages of Marigot, Wesley, Woodfordhill, Calibishie and Vieille Case. Unlike the residents of Vieille Case, Woodfordhill and Calibishie who speak Kwéyòl, the people of Wesley and Marigot have always spoken English and *cockoy*.<sup>2</sup>

Kwéyòl is spoken in all of Dominica's Southern and South-eastern villages (See Illustration No. 2). Overall, more than 90% of the Dominican population speak Kwéyòl (Henderson 1988). The number of Kwéyòl speakers in Dominica's capital rose significantly after 1981, when the Cultural Division under the Ministry for Community Development

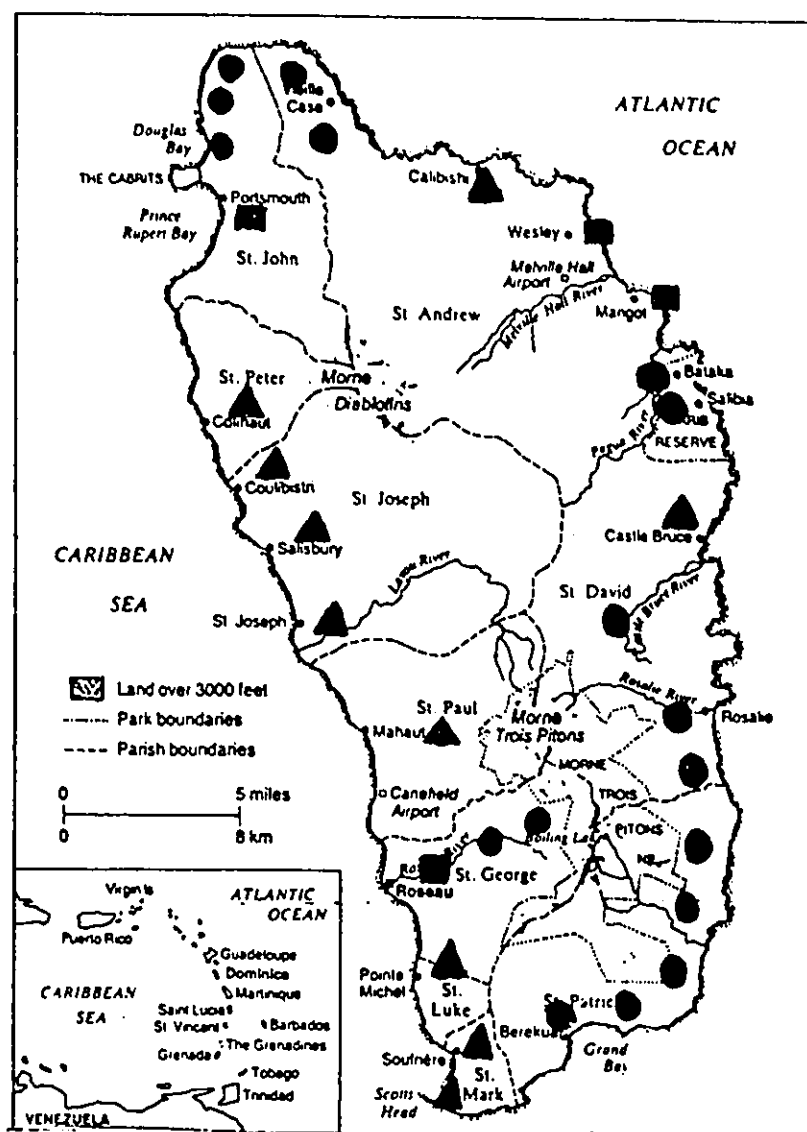
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<sup>1</sup> The huckstering trade is being mentioned for two reasons. Firstly, it represented the efforts of hundreds of rural Dominican women to be economically independent and self-reliant. Secondly, and more significantly, the trade opened the way for the migration of thousands of other Dominicans to Martinique and Guadeloupe, particularly the latter. Among those migrating to Guadeloupe in search of employment in the 1970s were Kadans musicians. There they would be exposed to both Guadeloupean Creole and Haitian Cadence music. They would adopt the Haitian Cadence and the French Beguine, add the Calypso which they brought from Dominica and create Cadence-lypso (Kadans). With the frequent movement of peoples between those islands, and the language compatible, the music was easily transported.

<sup>2</sup> The people of Wesley and Marigot were originally from Antigua. Their grand-parents moved to Dominica after 1834 when the Antiguan slaves were granted immediate emancipation, unlike those in the other Caribbean islands who had to serve a four year apprenticeship period. Being the products of English plantation society, they, therefore, spoke an English Creole which the locals called *cockoy*. Within their constructions one may hear the word *art* as in the sentence, *which art you a go*. As early as 1893, Wesley was identified as the only place where English was spoken in Dominica (Goodridge 1972:151). Today, the *cockoy* story-teller at Independence Anniversary celebrations has attained the same status as the Kwéyòl story-teller.

## Map of Dominica (2)

(Language-related information provided)



- Kwéyòl-speaking
- ▲ Kwéyòl-speaking predominantly
- English-speaking predominantly

Source: Robert A. Myers. *Dominica*. Oxford: CLIO Press, 1987. p. 191.

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introduced Creole Week.<sup>3</sup> Despite this *democratization* of the majority language, under the island's Constitution non-English speakers are debarred from election to the House of Assembly or nomination to the Senate.<sup>4</sup>

Dominica is a parliamentary democracy with a House of Assembly composed of 21 representatives, 11 on the government side and 10 on the oppositions'. The *traditional* contestants for those seats have been the Dominica Freedom Party (DFP) and the Dominica Labour Party (DLP), ousted by the DFP in 1980. However, in the 1990 elections<sup>5</sup> voters transformed the composition by giving six of the opposition seats to the United Workers Party (UWP). This new addition holds tremendous implications for the future political and economic development of Dominica. Firstly, the UWP is supported by a strong body of city-based middle-class professionals who became disenchanted with the growth-oriented policies of the Eugenia Charles administration from 1985 to 1990, and the absence of direction in the aging Dominica Labour Party. Secondly, the diehard supporters of the United Workers Party come from the agriculturally lucrative communities of Wesley, Marigot and adjoining villages. From such an economic base they are likely to command political power.

---

<sup>3</sup> Creole Week (Simenn Kwéyòl) is celebrated each year on or around October 31 to coincide with the country's independence day celebrations on November 3. All Dominicans who do not speak Kwéyòl are asked to try. As the years progressed from 1981, Simenn Kwéyòl took on additional features. According to Kwéyòl Broadcaster, Felix Henderson, "Kwéyòl penetrated the banks, schools and offices" (1988:5). The national radio's entire day of programming was conducted in Kwéyòl. In an introductory letter to the *Kwéyòl Journal*, President of Dominica, Sir Clarence Seignoret wrote, "I understand that it has its own grammar, syntax and orthography ... an essential part of Dominica's cultural heritage, and a prominent feature in pin-pointing our cultural identity" (1989:2).

<sup>4</sup> According to the Constitution, "... a person shall be qualified to be elected as a Representative if, and shall not be so qualified unless, he (c) is able to speak and, unless incapacitated by blindness or other physical cause, to read the English language with a degree of proficiency sufficient to enable him to take an active part in the proceedings of the House" (*The Commonwealth of Dominica Constitution Orders 1978*, Chapter 111, p. 27). A similar restriction was cited in the St. Lucia Constitution by Lawrence Carrington, who in commenting said, "... the effect of the clause is to exclude a significant proportion of the population from participation in the affairs of state" (1988:13).

<sup>5</sup> Elections are held every five years.

Dominica's economy is supported principally by agriculture. Of the twenty-three products listed in Table 1 under Principal Domestic Exports, sixteen are derived from the land, with bananas contributing 70.4% to the export trade in 1988. The principal market for bananas is the United Kingdom, with countries of the European Economic Community absorbing 70% of Dominica exports. Toilet and household soaps and coconut oil are produced by the Dominica Coconut Products Limited which contributed 75% to the value added in the manufacturing in 1988 (Central Statistical Office 1988:7). Dominica also exports water to the Leeward and United States Virgin Islands, and a variety of produce such as grapefruits, oranges, dasheen, tannias and cut flowers to the countries of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). Dominica's economy remains rooted in agriculture employing some 7,000 farmers.

In 1989 the Caribbean Community absorbed 40.6% of Dominica's total domestic exports, with the smaller OECS grouping absorbing 38.6%. 17% of Dominica's imports originate from within the Community, with the remainder coming from North America and the European Community. In 1988 Dominica imported close to \$EC290 million from within and outside the Caribbean, while it exported \$EC113 million, leaving a deficit of approximately \$EC178 million. Servicing that deficit depends heavily on continued progress within the rural agricultural sector and the burgeoning manufacturing, industrial and financial sectors. There are, however, signs of increased infrastructural expansion and a greater openness on the part of Dominicans to the world community. An improved network of roads<sup>6</sup> has brought rural and urban peoples in closer contact. The island's two airports have been upgraded, its seaports made more accessible to larger freighters and its telephone communication system made totally digital. Electricity has been extended to twenty rural communities, on the heels of which has

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<sup>6</sup> In 1983, the government of Dominica undertook a massive road maintenance and rehabilitation program. 226 kilometres of major roads and 56 kilometres of feeder roads were rehabilitated and constructed respectively. There is now increased urbanization and rural-urban interaction.

followed the cable television services.<sup>7</sup>

There are three radio stations on the island. Two are religious and foreign-owned. The third is the government-subsidized Dominica Broadcasting Corporation. Dominica's only newspaper, *The New Chronicle* is privately owned, with majority shares being held by the Diocese of Roseau (The Catholic Church) and Management Consultants Limited. It is a weekly publication with a circulation of 2,500, for the most part restricted to the city (Brown & Sanatan 1987:105).

While rural peoples do read the newspaper, the frequent complaint is that the paper does not reflect their reality, except when it chooses to print an accident, an urban-planned political event held in the rural areas, or the behavior of youth in an otherwise underdeveloped rural environment. The predominance of Kwéyòl in the country-side does not, as might be assumed, inhibit readership of English newspapers. Speakers of Kwéyòl are indeed bilingual.

Dominica has a literacy rate of 75%. In 1987 the country's 16,105 primary school students were administered by 646 teachers, an average of one teacher to 25 students. At the secondary level there was a total of 3,264 students and 171 teachers, and in 1987, 25 teachers taught 326 students at college level. The language of administration is English.

There is no possibility that Kwéyòl will ever be used as the language of administration. Attempts at using Kwéyòl in primary school education in St. Lucia, Dominica, Guadeloupe and Haiti have been well documented by Carrington.<sup>8</sup> What Carrington reveals about Dominica is worth noting. He observes that when Dominica was struck by Hurricane David in 1979 the

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<sup>7</sup> By September 1989, MARPIN TV Company Limited, a private cable concern reported connections over 75% of the island, with future expansion into the North and North-East moving at a rate of about 30 square miles per year. By September 1991 the company should attain island-wide coverage. MARPIN TV uses eight (8) channels.

A second television concern is VIDEO ONE. VIDEO ONE has been instrumental in producing a number of local programs. It uses one channel (13) and the service is free to viewers in Roseau and its immediate environs. Programs are also pre-recorded and presented at Portsmouth. VIDEO ONE has recently been seeking to expand its services to areas other than Roseau and Portsmouth.

<sup>8</sup> Lawrence Carrington. *Creole Discourse and Social Development*, 1988.

adult education department in the hope of reaching the majority of isolated rural peoples, launched a series of radio broadcasts in Creole. Yet that same department does not apply the language to literacy education (1988:23). This initiative could not be conducted in isolation. The adult education department operates under the aegis of the ministry for education which in fact is prepared to announce the compilation of a Creole orthography but would not be explicit about the use of Creole in education. Moreover, Dominica's future education policies are invariably connected with the advance of technology, the bulk of which functions with the use of English manuals. In effect, to be counted, Dominica has to keep pace with the English-speaking world.

The Dominica which today holds relations with the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the European Development Fund, the European Economic Community, the United States Agency for International Development, CARICOM and the French departments may constitute a vibrant political, socio-economic and cultural system, but not by ignoring its history, nor the contribution that culture has made to its development. One-time Chief Cultural Officer, Alwin Bully compared Dominica's vibrancy with that of Haiti and Jamaica. This thesis takes up the position that the vibrancy which Bully identified in Dominica grew out of a level of cultural resistance in the 1970s. It was a resistance which informed popular, political and economic discourse.

In order to develop that argument, this thesis will restrict its data to the period 1974 to 1978. I will examine the lyrics of Kadans musicians and Calypsonians as written and performed during that period in an effort to trace their ability to interpret the political and socio-economic developments of a nation breaking away from colonial dependency. The Calypsonians and Musicians are regarded as the popular voice expressing the history and socio-economic plight of the masses.

In chapter One Dominica's linguistic history will be briefly traced. That chapter will also provide a background to cultural practices in Dominica, practices begun on French and

British plantations and at the core of Dominica's contemporary cultural celebrations, music and language. A theoretical framework and literature review will be combined in the first chapter, and a brief methodological approach outlined.

Chapter Two, Politics and Culture, will be placed within the context of two political and cultural movements which surfaced in Dominica in the early 1970s. They were Black Power and Rastafarianism/Dread. As political and cultural movements, their ideology posed a threat to that of the Patrick John administration. In adopting legislation to thwart their activities, particularly those of the Dreads, the administration drew on the repressive state apparatus, firstly the police and then the army. It was in response to the brutality suffered by the Dreads and the restrictions of the Dread Act that Musicians such as Philip "Chubby" Mark sang, and Calypsonians such as "Spider" cried brutality and crime. Their lyrics informed the masses, and the common cry of corruption positioned the opposition political forces to do battle in parliament. The level of political resistance demonstrated by the masses resulted in the down-fall of the John administration in a civil uprising in 1979.

Chapter Three, Economics and Culture, will examine the 1974-78 government's economic development programs; only this time I shall place the argument within the urban-rural dichotomy. As in chapter Two, I shall draw on parliamentary debates. Four major observations will be made in chapter Three. Firstly, there were economic interests battling to establish hegemony. Secondly, while the government development programs were commendable, they were not all reaching the people in need. Thirdly, the interests of class formations within the society were being affected by the government's tax programs. Finally, the Calypsonians were restricted to their city specificity in critiquing the economic activities of the John administration.

Despite this limitation, the Calypsonians were able to uncover sediments of colonial hegemony instilled in the social behaviour of the *bourgeoisie*, behaviours structured after a certain economic advantage. What they did not foresee was that the unity achieved in times

of struggle was only temporary and the said political formations which they supported against the John administration would not thoroughly represent the economic interests of the masses.

Chapter Four, Communication and Culture, will examine the prescribed and transformed role of radio in Dominica. I will relate how the popular language in the lyrics of Kadans musicians transformed the direction of radio. It will be argued that despite the political and cultural resistance demonstrated by the lyrics of Kadans, it was the vehicle for opening up the national broadcasting service to Kwéyòl programs. Government development programs could then reach farmers in a language that they could understand.

Calypso, more than Kadans was heavily censored, though both suffered the fate of having their songs taken off the air-waves. In this context they will be seen as having opened gaps in the dominant discourse but meeting much resistance. In the case of Calypso, its popular expression was not only subject to the censorship of government officials, but also to persons who supported its lyrical content in the hope of containing its motifs. These observations on the struggles for controlling cultural expression revealed the internal contradictions of a nation in search of its identity.

The final chapter will reflect on the preceding four. I will adopt the position that the developments in the 1980s were not divorced from the advancements in the 1970s. It will be argued that development is interrelated, interdependent and interconnected. I intend to show that the cultural expression of Dominica through Calypso and Kadans lyrics is inextricably intertwined with any attempts at attaining political, economic, moral and intellectual unity.

## DEFINITIONS

### Cadence-lypso

Cadence-lypso, referred to as Kadans by Rabess (1989) and Devonish (1986), is an indigenous Dominican music form. Magloire (1982) defined it as a mixture of Haitian merengue, Guadeloupean beguine and Trinidad's Calypso tempo. According to Philip "Chubby" Mark, "Cadence-lypso is about three kin-a-music come together: Calypso, Mazouk and Beguine. But we in Dominica mix our Kadans with Calypso and Mazouk and call it Cadence-lypso" (Interview. September 1990). Rabess (1989a) contends that Kadans was powerful not only because of its social contents but because of its use of the people's language, Kwéyòl.<sup>9</sup> To this day Kadans continues to use Kwéyòl as its language of communication.

### Calypso

Trinidad and Tobago's Hollis "Chalkdust" Liverpool attempted to come to terms with the origin of Calypso, agreeing finally that, "[T]he majority of researchers ... have found evidence to equate the Calypso's beginning with West Africa" (1986:9). Calypso was reconstructed on Caribbean plantation society by the African labour force.

Jacob Elder notes that during the period of slavery Calypso was originally a medium of social protest and was regarded as vulgar by the European ruling class and the regulators of law and order (1966:3382-A). Though Calypso met official resistance in most of developing Caribbean societies, its 4/4 notation, along with its inherent call and response techniques reached a zenith in Trinidad and Tobago. According to Manning, Calypso was reconstructed by Trinidad's "urban underclass" and the music dealt with "the social world as seen and

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<sup>9</sup> Of the seven songs recorded by Ophelia Marie's on her 1985 album, *Trahison*, five were delivered in Kwéyòl. Gordon Henderson's *Parlez Creole* recorded in 1986 contains eight songs, four delivered in Kwéyòl. According to Rabess the vast majority of recorded Kadans songs use Kwéyòl.

experienced by those marginal to the official culture" (1990:415).

Calypso would become popular in Dominica in the 1950s (Honeychurch 1990), and was infected with the rhythms and language of Dominican Creole society. Dominican Calypso uses English Creole predominantly although Kwéyòl phrases may be inserted for greater popular appeal. Interestingly, in 1990 Calypso King of the World, the "Mighty Sparrow" of Trinidad and Tobago, recorded a song entitled *Manjé* (Eat) which drew the attention of Dominican composers and the Caribbean public. The song's chorus was delivered in Kwéyòl, harking back to the days when Trinidad was occupied by the French.

### Creole (Kwéyòl)

In the Caribbean context, Pauline Christie defines Creole as a variety of languages born out of contact between West African languages on the one hand and the languages of the colonizing nations - English, French, Dutch, Portuguese - on the other. Creole is the term used by linguists. Speakers of Creole call it *patois* (Cuthbert & Pidgeon 1982:29), spelt *patwa* by Rabess (1989). Similar definitions are held by Henderson (1988) and Carrington, the latter regarding Creole as a system of communication developed between Europeans and Africans during the period of European colonial expansion, the trade in slaves, and the plantation phase of Caribbean economy (1988:6). The lyrics in this research used French Creole (Kwéyòl) in cadence-lypso (Kadans) and English Creole predominantly, in Calypso.

### Culture

Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson in *Resistance Through Rituals* define culture as

the peculiar and distinctive 'way of life' of a group or class, the meanings, values and ideas embodied in institutions, in social relations, in systems of beliefs, in mores and customs, in the use of objects and material life ... A culture includes the 'maps of meaning; which make things intelligible to its members (1976:10-11).

Caribbean author George Lamming presents two definitions of culture. Firstly, culture is the way women and men achieve their material existence, the way in which they battle with nature



in order to assure and to ensure, not only their survival, but their reproduction. Secondly, culture is the way women and men interpret that existence (1990:11). While the definition presented by Hall et al will be used in process throughout, that of Lamming will be particularly pertinent to chapter Three, Economics and Culture.

### **Development**

Development implies change. After the second World War, development was conceived by international donor agencies in terms of growth targets, a view described by Verhelst as "modernization and catching-up ... (wherein) the indigenous cultures of the people of the Third World have been largely neglected" (1990:22). Goulet identifies three concepts which should accompany economic and social transformation. They are *self esteem*, *life-sustenance* and *freedom*. Life-sustenance is concerned with the provision of basic needs, self-esteem with the feeling of self-respect and independence, and freedom refers to freedom from the three evils of want, ignorance and squalor. Using Goulet's categories, Thirlwall conceived of development as an improvement in basic needs, when economic progress has contributed to a greater sense of self-esteem for the country and individuals within it, and when material advancement has expanded the range of choices for individuals (1983:5). According to Verhelst, this means recognizing the enduring quality of indigenous cultures and discovering their vitality as "economic, social and political sources of life" (1990:23).

Jan Servaes lends a perspective which will permeate chapter Three and beyond. In addition to the above, Servaes adds an understanding of ecological factors and ecosystems, participatory democracy, and structural changes in social relations and economic activity (1989:49-50). In chapter Five, I shall advance the definition to incorporate the dialectic stressing the interconnectedness, interrelationship and interdependence (Konstantinov 1982:98) of the facets of development.

### Dreads

The Dreads were an off-shoot of the Jamaican Rastafarians.<sup>10</sup> Dread means "the power that lies within any man ... a philosophy of getting the most out of life, using one's potential for living as fully as possible" (Simpson 1978:129). Dreads regarded marijuana as spiritual food for greater insight into life, nature and the political, ideological, economic and social system which they, like their parent body, referred to as *Babylon*. For the Dreads, Babylon was the 1974-78 Dominican society. Their way of life and other activities met legal and armed opposition from the John administration, often resulting in extreme cases of brutality. This is the subject of chapter Two.

### Hegemony

Drawing on the works of Italian Antonio Gramsci, Stuart Hall defines hegemony as "the moment when a ruling class is able to exert a "total social authority" over subordinate classes, prescribing not only the specific content of ideas, but the limits within which ideas and conflicts move and are resolved" (1975:39). Hegemony, he adds, is characterized by combination of force and consent, without force predominating excessively over consent (*ibid.* p. 13). Hegemony works primarily by placing the subordinate classes into key institutions and structures which support the power and authority of the dominant order. According to Hall, the leaders in hegemony are not a ruling class in the traditional language, but a historic bloc, "a transient, temporary moment" (1986a:15). The concept of hegemony as it relates to economic and class formations will be advanced as the thesis develops.

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<sup>10</sup> George Simpson (1978:126) described the Rastafarians as a religio-political cult which began to take shape about 1930. He outlined the basic Rastafarian doctrines, among them being that Ethiopia is Heaven, and Haile Selassie (then ruler of Ethiopia) is the living God. Simpson's observations have, however, been criticized. According to J.V. Owens, when Simpson lists the doctrines of the Rastafarians, "he does not ... go very deep into the inner coherence ... with the result that others reading him would perceive them as just another fanatical sect ..." (1975:87).

### Ideology

Ideology as defined by Stuart Hall is "the concepts, languages, categories, imagery of thought, and the system of representations which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of, define, figure out and render intelligible the way society works" (1986:29). A second definition will also be useful in this thesis. Armand Mattelart defines ideology as "the reserve of signs used to rationalize class domination, signs prescribed by the requirement that they must function for a system whose bases they mask" (1978:17).

According to Hebdige (1979:12), ideology cannot be bracketed off from everyday life as a self-contained set of political opinions or biased views, neither can it be reduced to the abstract dimensions of a world-view or used in the crude Marxist sense of false consciousness. Hebdige is correct in making the latter observation. Bottomore et al agree that that notion of false consciousness can be equated with Marx's earlier writings, but state also that after the 1850s Marx was to affirm that the real problems of humanity were not "mistaken ideas but real social contradictions, the former (being) a consequence of the latter" (1983:219).

Though Marx's treatise that the modes of production dictate the characteristics of all the rest of society is a significant point of departure for understanding social contradictions, ideology or ideological practice will not be restricted to those who own the means of production. Rather I will draw on Hall's modification as stated above, where ideology can be developed and used by different classes and social groups.

### Popular Culture

With particular reference to the Caribbean, Lent (1990) restricts popular culture to film, comic art, music, carnival, sports, satire and literature, funeral wakes and their singing and music, and popular theatre. In the Caribbean popular culture draws on the folk foundation and involves mass appeal and participation wherein what is popular is not unfamiliar in its origin to the masses.

### Resistance

Selwyn Cudjoe in *Resistance and Caribbean Literature* identifies three forms of resistance. In cultural resistance, the motive emanates from the beliefs, mores or indigenous ways of life and is expressed in religion or the arts. Socio-economic resistance is expressed by suicide, abortion, work sabotage and withholding labour. Political resistance emanates from an ideological framework. The goal of the enslaved/colonized peoples is to control their destiny - be it full independence or some form of government - and may be expressed in revolts, rebellions or revolutions (1980:19).

### Road march

The song that most frequently accompanies masquerade bands as they dance and parade through the streets (Manning 1990:418).

### Zouk

*Carib Beat* defined Zouk as a Creole word meaning *party*. However, the word Zouk as described as liberally spiced with traditions from around the world, more distinctively:

Antillean GRO-KA and Mambo, Haitian CADENCE and MERENGUE, Latin SALSA and MAMBO, American FUNK, Ghanaian HIGHLIFE and Zairian SOUKOS. As a result of the fusion, ZOUK can simply be dubbed as an AFRO-CARIBBEAN melange with EURO-WESTERN sensibilities (1990:30).

Zouk became very popular in Dominica after the demise of Kadans in the late 1970s. The music form uses Kwéyòl in its lyrics.

# CHAPTER ONE

## LANGUAGE, CULTURE, HISTORY

Pa kwiyoné mwen, nou soti hod Afrik  
(Don't fool me, we came from Africa)  
(Belles Combo. 1978).

The languages and musical techniques used by Kadans musicians and Calypsonians in the 1970s have a long history of resistance and resilience. This chapter will trace briefly how those language and musical techniques were created on the Caribbean island of Dominica. I will begin firstly with the Arawaks, fragments of whose language survived Carib intervention into their societies. The Carib language itself was subdued under French colonialism, and in concert with the Caribs, the African labour force would create another - French Creole (Kwéyòl) - which contained elements of Arawak, Carib, African and French. The English, in their desire to colonize sought to wipe out all things French including the *bastardized* French Creole and their own *bastardized* English Creole. Two hundred years later Kwéyòl remains the mother-tongue of the Dominican people. To demonstrate the resilience of the Kwéyòl culture this chapter will describe cultural practices of the Dominican peoples. I will show that what is being practised today originated from the ingenuity of the slaves on French and British plantation societies.

In terms of resilience of musical techniques, I shall focus on the lyrics of Kadans and Calypso. Kadans which adopted the Kwéyòl language and music forms of the slaves will be considered the true inheritor of Kwéyòl cultural practices. Calypso which became popular in Dominica in the 1950s, invariably adopted Kwéyòl images in its lyrics. Fundamental to the two forms were the practices of the "African (religious) culture" (Brathwaite 1974:13). That culture which was reconstructed on Caribbean plantation society represented the basis from which slaves and later free peoples would demonstrate their ingenuity and skills of survival. Kwéyòl, therefore, flourished in Kadans, and satire and double entendres flourished in Calypso.

Those two techniques of social commentary in song were to *bastardize* French and English respectively, but more particularly they were to be used to challenge the ideas inherent in the colonial and national establishments of the growing nation. The ideas expressed by the Musicians and Composers were contained in lyrics which drew representations from a particularly volatile cultural environment.

Following a description of the cultural practices of the people of Dominica, the significance of the study will be outlined and a literature review and theoretical framework presented. Finally, the methodology to be used in this thesis will be explained. Hopefully, chapter One should provide a framework against which future work can be conducted in more detail on the level of resistance demonstrated by peoples who lived on Dominica as early as the beginning of the Christian era.

### Arawaks, Caribs, the Spanish and French

The Arawaks<sup>1</sup> arrived in Dominica around the beginning of the Christian era. They were later to be driven out by the seafaring and astrologically-minded Caribs.<sup>2</sup> According to anthropologist/linguist Douglas Taylor, the Caribs killed the Arawak males and took their females as wives. As a result two languages were spoken in Carib society, one among the women and another among the men. It was through the daughters of Arawak women that their

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<sup>1</sup> They originated from the shores of the mainland near the mouth of the Orinoco, moving North along the coast of Venezuela into the Caribbean. It is significant to note that one of their major Gods was Yocahu, the Arawak male God and giver of manioc (Honeychurch 1984:16). Manioc or cassava was their major source of nutrition in addition to fish and herbs. They demonstrate that one's material existence is connected with one's beliefs.

<sup>2</sup> They originated from the Orinoco region in the South. They did not call themselves Caribs. The men were called *Karina* and the women *Karifuna*. The Spaniards called them *Caribales*. Today one of Dominica's excellent theatrical troupes comes from the Carib Territory and is called *Karifuna*. The name Carib is the root of the name *Caribbean*.

language survived.<sup>3</sup> While Taylor (1972:4) gives no direct indication of communication between men and women he points to a sense of harmony within the family and tribe where "commands were practically unknown, and the only sanctions were those of personal or family vendettas"

From November 1493 when Columbus was discovered on the shores of Dominica, till the demise of Spain's influence in the Caribbean in 1647, the Caribs would remain a thorn in the flesh in Spanish tales of discovery. In Dominica the destruction of their language was fiercely and successfully contested and efforts to temper them with Christianity failed utterly (Borome, 1972b:72).

Like the Spanish, the French came to *christianize*. Drifting inland they purchased land with rum, clothes and arms, felled trees,<sup>4</sup> and "flattered themselves on a sure influence with the savages who understood their language better than English" (Borome 1972a:81). As they purchased land, their population and the need for labour increased.<sup>5</sup>

Africans who accompanied their French masters from Guadeloupe and Martinique brought a variety of language forms and together with the Caribs, the Africans began "absorbing the French vocabulary" (Borome 1972a:80). The languages of both the Africans and Caribs were subdued. What emerged was a mixture of French and African with traces of

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<sup>3</sup> According to Honeychurch, "over the years, the island-Carib language developed in which the Arawak/Lokono was stronger. In language at least the women triumphed in the end!" (1988:7).

<sup>4</sup> From this point the destruction of the forests began. It was not a practice known to either the Arawaks, Caribs or the Africans who later came. The *high woods* was the source of all existence, and today the context within which the Kwéyòl story-teller (conteur) weaves his stories.

<sup>5</sup> In 1730 the population of Dominica numbered 776, stood at 4,790 in 1753 and within ten years was 7,890. In 1753 there were 1,260 Europeans and 3530 slaves. In 1763, there were 1,718 Europeans, 500 free negroes and 5,872 slaves of which 3,145 were working adults and 2,113 children. 50 - 60 Carib families were reported. (Borome 1972a:94).

Slaves outnumbered Europeans by almost 5 to 1. Whatever system used for maintaining order and increased production had to be repressive. Resistance was frequently articulated in song and dance, though sometimes it took the form of physical violence.

island-Carib<sup>6</sup> to be found in common nouns such as place-names, trees and animals. The final product was Kwéyòl, today the *mother-tongue* of the Dominican population. While there has been no concerted interest in researching the African languages in use on arrival on British plantations in Dominica,<sup>7</sup> *Karifuna*<sup>8</sup> has sought to revive the Carib language, dances and song.

### The English, Africans and Plantation Society

The Carib language would survive Spain but would be subdued by the French. Original African languages would be obliterated but not without the savage treatment meted out to French. When the English finally took Dominica from the French in 1805 they faced two major difficulties. The first was to wipe out all things French and the second was to install an all-English policy in all institutions of the colony. They succeeded in the latter but not in the former. The very structure of British plantation society was a function of economic

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<sup>6</sup> The island-Carib made Dominican Kwéyòl distinct from, but not incomprehensible to Kwéyòl speakers of Haiti, Martinique, St. Vincent, Guadeloupe and St. Lucia. There appears to be a general agreement on the ease of communication among users of the Kwéyòl language. Lawrence Carrington (1988:8) cites McVey Graham's attempts at measuring the intelligibility of St. Lucian, by speakers of other varieties of Kwéyòl and arrived at the following:

St. Lucian	with Martiniquan	89.0%
	with Dominican	98.5%
	with Guadeloupean	76.5%
	with Guyanais	82.5%

McVey's inter-intelligibility measurement suggests a low relation between St. Lucian and Guadeloupean. There is no doubt that the music which accompanies the Kwéyòl lyrics in song is itself a fundamental language, equally intelligible to both groups.

<sup>7</sup> Gregory Rabess, a cultural critic and writer in Dominica has reported the use of African words, chants and expressions in the Kadans music of "Exile One" in songs such as *Aki Yaka*, *Olé Olé*, and *Peyi a Mwen* (My Country). For "Exile One" it was both a historical and commercial commitment. Their music is popular in Africa and the Seychelles. Other than that attempt by "Exile One" to *re-introduce* African elements in their compositions, very little has been done on the original language of the African peoples in Dominica. It is possible that the Kwéyòl syntax provides a sufficient trace of that African element.

<sup>8</sup> The Carib cultural troupe.



and class exploitation. The labour force was at the base. At the top were the white attorneys, managers and planters and their wives, and in the middle, the French mulatto. Though the mulatto of French-African mix owned land, businesses and slaves and were members of the militia, they were refused participation in an all-English parliament.

Slaves who provided the labour force on plantations owned both by the mulatto and British land-owners, developed techniques for expressing resistance to exploitation and ridiculing the class antagonisms in the society. And they did it best in the language they knew. This the British could not curtail. The inequities existing in the society generated a solidarity among those who provided labour. Put another way, those who represented the labour force - the majority - identified with each other through a common mode of material existence within which was planted their language and musical expression.

Conditions surrounding the unequal distribution of wealth continued to exist in the 1970s, with the exception that the ruling party was not middle-upper class in its origin. The ruling Dominica Labour Party was a working-class Party representing people who spoke Kwéyòl most of the times and owned small parcels of land, unlike the mulatto and upper class. Economic advantage and language choice were interrelated. Writing of the state of Kwéyòl 154 years after emancipation of slaves, Felix Henderson noted,

[B]ecause it was spoken mainly by a group of people who had been denied educational opportunities, it became associated with the poor and labouring classes, and indeed became a distinguishing mark of the lower classes. To protect their social status, the upper and middle classes would not speak creole, at least not in public and forbade their children from learning or even speaking it (1988:2).

With marked resilience Kadans musicians adopted Kwéyòl in song as a medium for articulating popular resistance to economic and political repression practised by the 1974-78 government which served as the keeper of colonial authority. Calypsonians first embraced the colonizers

language and injected it with their own formulations,<sup>9</sup> at times relinquishing the political, economic and ideological contexts within which they survived. It was not always possible, however, to separate their language from their consciousness. "Language," say Marx and Engels, "is as old as consciousness" (1972:51), and consciousness from the very beginning has been a social product. Maintaining the Marxian line, Louis Dupré adds that language derives from social relations which themselves are determined by the mode of production. His observation that consciousness may have a natural origin but once it has emerged it places itself "in opposition to its natural context" (1983:83-84), will be of significance in chapter Four. At this point it is significant to note that the language and music of both Calypsonians and Kadans musicians reflected the historical and cultural practices of survival of the Dominican peoples. The dialectic of lyrics and political, economic and moral unity will become more evident in chapter Five when the contributions of the Calypsonians to national development in the 1980s and 1990s is analyzed.

### Cultural Practices of Dominican People

If we consider the provision of labour on plantation society as a cultural expression, it was alienated labour and alienated culture. The early Dominican peoples of African descent had very little time for themselves. When they did get free time on Sundays and holidays they used it to tend their small patches, create musical instruments and entertain. We should turn to Dominican historian Lennox Honeychurch for an insight into their cultural practices.

Adept at mimicking and modifying, they adapted various dances from French plantation society. Honeychurch lends an insight into the various dance forms and the instruments accompanying those forms. Among these were the Mazouk and the Quadrille. The Mazouk

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<sup>9</sup> "Surely, one of the most overt, explicit and successful acts of subversion has been what has been done to the English language as it passed through the experience of Africans in the New World" (Philip 1985:44-50).

is composed of a variety of steps with a pattern which starts with a smooth glide on the third note, shuffle step for the next notes, another smooth glide and a series of cross steps until one is back to the first position.

The Quadrille involves five separate and complete figures. According to Honeychurch the five are: Le Pantalon, L'Ete, La Poule, La Trenise or La Pastourelle and Finale. It is a long and colourful dance and today, a highlight at Dominica's independence celebrations.

The Bélé (bellaire, belaire) is the earliest Creole dance dating back to Africa. It has its roots in mating and fertility dance rites. At independence celebrations it is a dance of tremendous energy. The drum rhythm follows the step of the single dancer who performs in a circle of spectators who also form the chorus or *lavway* for the lead or *chantrelle*.

There is a single instrument - the tambou drum - properly made of goatskin stretched over a hollowed tree trunk. Honeychurch traces the dance as involving four positions leading to a final uniting of tensions. He traces the pattern as follows.

1. Cavalier shows physical style and prowess
2. Dam shows approval and tempts him
3. The Cavalier seeks the Dam once more
- 4 Both dance in the most heated place

A number of other dances were popular but faded with time or were incorporated into the Quadrille and Mazouk. They are: the Po'ka of strong Eastern European roots, the Cotillon of French origin, the Schottische a 19th century dance similar to the Polka, and the Contredanse of French origin.

A variety of instruments made out of indigenous material accompanied the dancers. The drum was (is) at the centre. There was the tambou twavai (working drum), tambou bélé (bellaire drum), the tambou laylay (constant drumming, with sticks made from the laylay bush), and the tambal, a circular drum held in the hand with flattened pieces of tin placed between the skin and the frame to create a ringing sound. In addition there was the *gwage* or shack-

shack, made either by emptying the contents of a bori gourd and filling the space with stones or by flattening a piece of tin and pressing it into a cylindrical shape, blocking the two ends. The tin is pierced with nails creating holes against which two wire spikes are scratched. The *boom-boom* served as bass. This was a long cylindrical pipe which was blown into. The accordion and the triangle were at the centre of the rhythm section (Honeychurch 1988: 61-64). These instruments have found their way into the modern recording studios. Kadans and Zouk musicians have used modern day instruments to create those sounds, but the drum section, among others, has remained the same despite more recent replacements by the computerized drum machine. Producers contend that too many microphones are involved with the use of the drummer.

Underlying those musical and dance expressions was a relationship with the land reaching back to the Caribs who shared their knowledge of herbs and hunting with the Africans who had themselves learnt to identify tropical plants. Today, performer Ophelia Marie is thrilled by the *Eucalyptus* which traditionally was (is) believed to provide health when planted in the neighbourhood. Nature (was) is sacred and each living thing contained its spirit, good and bad. The myth<sup>10</sup> of the spirit world forms an anthology unto itself. When Roman Catholicism blended with the African spirit world what emerged was a collage startling to modern artists.

An example was the *papa bwa* - father of the woods. Honeychurch described him as dark brown like a tree trunk, very old and very wise. His eyes are like fire and he lives among snakes. He can be helpful and kind if you show you are not afraid of the high woods, but any weakness meant instant enslavement where you disappear from mortal beings. The

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<sup>10</sup> Defined here not as false ideas, but as stories by which a culture explains or understands some aspect of reality or nature. According to John Fiske, primitive myths are about life and death, men and gods, good and evil. *Sophisticated* myths are about masculinity and femininity, about the family etc. For Barthes myth is a culture's way of thinking about something, a way of conceptualizing or understanding it (1986:93 (emphasis mine). Are sophisticated myths returning to their primitive roots and/or fighting them?

moral is clear! The *mama glo* (mother of the water) was less fearful. She is a sort of mermaid who sits near river pools of which there are many so pure that the fish life in the high woods will respond to the slightest drop of blood entering the water. The *mama glo* will command you to do all sorts of menial tasks. She can sometimes behave like a *diabliesse* (female devil) if her requests are not granted.

The spirit world is the home of the story-teller who weaves, into exaggerated mortality and contracted immortality, an intriguing account of politics and social commentary. His spontaneity is rooted in key proverbs passed on from generation to generation in a largely oral society. The *conteur* punctuates his story as the plot unfolds by shouting *mésyé kwik* and the audience responds *kwak*. The entire story is delivered in Kwéyòl.<sup>11</sup>

Creole socio-cultural practices was not, however, restricted to dance, music and conte. Creole society was also foods,<sup>12</sup> methods of tilling the land,<sup>13</sup> a particular sensibility,<sup>14</sup> a mode

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<sup>11</sup> More recently, the people of Wesley and Marigot who were the first speakers of English (apart from the plantocracy) in Dominica, entered the conte competitions with English Creole called *cockoy*. This is an area of fruitful research. It would be necessary to trace how they arrived from Antigua to Dominica, their methods of survival, their strong Protestant roots coupled with their ability for hard work. Within the linguistic codes the researcher is likely to find old English words such as *art*. This was revealed to the author by Fred Henry, a resident of the village of Wesley.

<sup>12</sup> A melange of liquid foods using coconut milk, avocados, a wide variety of vegetables. To feast in Creole style was to use lots of cane juice, lots of fish, crabs, lobsters, crayfish. It was to feast on all the products of the land, it was to produce strength, a bright face, a cheerful and dancing spirit, a spontaneity.

<sup>13</sup> Koudmen came from the French, *coup-de-main*. It means lending a hand and by extension eating of the produce fresh from the land and the bordering river. It was not to purchase frozen foods. Koudmen was not individualistic. It was a community of friends and family taking turns to help each other in the cultivation of their half-acre. Secrets of the moon and methods of crop rotation were shared. There were few, if any land border disputes.

<sup>14</sup> Caring for each other. It was common to hear, "how is the family", "how is the wife", "how are the children". This is still practised in the rural areas today.

of dress,<sup>15</sup> an expansion of meaning into a riot of colour touching many other representations in the mind.<sup>16</sup> Kadans performer Ophelia Marie, contends that Kwéyòl is a whole different *manima* (attitude), a way of expressing life.

Your comportment changes. Your gesticulations change (laugh); your thinking. It's a completely different system from English from French, from any other language. It has a system of its own. My eyes light up, I know when I talk about Creole (laughter). I think it's my gut expression (Interview, September 1990).

Ophelia who speaks English, French and Dutch Creole (Papiamentu), blossomed out of the Creole (called patois) song tradition to become the Caribbean Lady of Song. As indicated in her excerpt above, it was difficult to express what is Creole. It is a truth too wholesome to put in words. It were better conceived on stage when all its qualities were blended into song and performance. It is necessary to examine the song tradition of the society, a tradition which informed Calypso and Kadans.

Creole society songs were social commentary. Calypso which was adapted from Trinidad in the 1950s encountered a tradition which only gave more fire to its witty urban character. The early masquerade (carnival) song was called a chante-mas, telling stories of important people, village conditions and the state of social services.<sup>17</sup> According to Caudeiron,

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<sup>15</sup> Dress communicated a woman's status particularly at festival time. This was made evident through the headgear. Honeychurch observed that a woman who wore a headpiece with one peak communicated "my heart is free". Two peaks, "my heart is engaged but you can take a chance"; three peaks, "my heart is already taken"; and four peaks, "I have a place for whoever desires" (1988:59). There is no doubt that we were dealing with a patriarchal society.

<sup>16</sup> For example when Ophelia sings *Aie Donmnik*, she says, "Aie Donmnik, tje'w ka washé". (Ah, Dominica, your heart is breaking). But *breaking* does not do justice to "v'ashé". The act of tearing the tuber from the earth carried that same meaning. A small-holding farmer may be heard to say, "Mwen k'allé washé dé ti dasheen". ("I am about to [going to] uproot some dasheen"). "Washé" is not only to break but to uproot, displace, rid the earth of its produce, tear it away. According to Ophelia, "I cannot *almost fall* in English".

<sup>17</sup> Mable "Cissie" Caudeiron, one of Dominica's most prolific folklorists recorded the following song composed over the shortage of water in the Southern village of Pte. Michel.

Lapointe pa ni d'lo, maman/Lapointe pa ni d'lo  
A nou dessan lavill wozo, pu nou bwe gwog la.  
(Pte.Michel has no water, Mama/ Pte.Michel has no water  
Let us go to the town of Roseau/To drink our rum).

Most of our 'chante-mas' used to have a sort of verse, sung by the 'chantrelle' ... while the chorus was given by the crowd of masqueraders. Today this truly African custom of ours, one voice leading and a crowd answering, seems to be dying out ... (1988:31).

Caudeiron should not have been so despondent. By 1977 "King Shakey's" *I Want To Know* was uniting artist (call) and audiences (response) in a communication characteristic only of what Caudeiron felt was disappearing. By 1987 Gordon Henderson of the Kadans band "Exile One" rocketed Carnival with his refrain *twje yo* (kill them), utilizing all the techniques which Caudeiron felt were fast dying; call and response and the *lapeau kabwit* (goat-skin drum) augmented by instruments of modern technology. Says Alwin Bully, Dominica's Chief Cultural Officer in the 1980s,

One of the few advantages of being one of the 'underdeveloped' countries of the Caribbean is the fact that the folk culture of Dominica was able to become a highly developed form of expression and, consequently, give the Dominican people a rather strong sense of identity and belief in themselves (1988:32).

In the 1970s Kadans musicians took those expressions and their language and brought them into song using the rhythm which undergirded Creole culture, the refrain of the Calypso, the Mazouk, and Cadence of Haiti. Calypsonians guarded the national terrain by reintroducing in a witty way, Kwéyòl into Calypso. Calypsonians found within English an arsenal for criticism of official English, the colonial culture, its parliament, its class and colour and its ideology. The people's language had found expression in the *modern* world.

### Significance of Project

This project is significant because,

- 1) there is the need for more case studies demonstrating that development is more than *economic* and should be conceived as an integral, multidimensional and dialectic process which differs from country to country (Servaes 1989:2-3),
- 2) ideology and hegemony are realities in the development and advance of colonies and ex-colonies. Moreover, in the Dominican and Caribbean context, the term ideology is usually

used in connection with Communism and Marxist-Leninism when in fact all social groups and classes deploy certain images, categories and language to understand the societies they live in. Secondly, the concept of hegemony, though implied in literature on the Dominican class struggle, was not consciously brought to bear on the class struggles of the 1970s.

3) music and its lyrics as media of communication and agents in the cultural development process have not been given sufficient attention in the Dominican context

4) the research for this project is grounded in intensive field work, utilizing multiple, mainly primary sources in interviews, parliamentary documents, personal experiences, observations, newspapers, magazines, audio tapes and d'scs.

### **Theoretical Framework/Literature Review**

When C. Wright Mills (1959:205) warned that fact disciplines reason, but reason is the advance guard of learning, he was concerned about a systematic departure from the ideals of the Enlightenment; the ideals of freedom and reason. That was 1959. Twenty seven years later John Durham Peters was writing of the intellectual poverty in the field of communication, stating that communication as a distinct field was a fact of power not of reason (1986:345). Communication as an intellectual pursuit seemed to suffer from its restriction to what Mills refers to as increasing rationality. Peters went on to state that thinkers such as Aristotle, Foucault, and Habermas can be of great assistance to the intellectual and organizational field of communication.

What are Aristotle, Foucault and Habermas saying to communication researchers? They are speaking about power, a power albeit which seems to be responding to an institutionalized intellectual poverty, rather than power as an instrument for mass liberation. Despite this restricted critical range they are suggesting to all communication researchers, in the words of Grossberg and Christians, the need to recover a consciousness of our own historicity. Says Mills,



too many of our old expectations are, after all tied down historically; too many of our standard categories of thought and of feeling as often disorient us as help to explain what is happening around us; too many of our explanations are derived from the great historical transitions from the Medieval to the Modern Age; and when generalized for use today, they become unwieldy, irrelevant, not convincing (1959:166).

The explanations have sustained the powerful against the powerless. The decisions that men make about the arrangements under which they live and the events surrounding the modern era, indicate clearly that the ideals of freedom and reason have become moot.

What contribution can the history of communication in the Caribbean make to an emerging discipline burdened with the issues of power, rationality, reason and freedom? Communication theory must locate itself within the institutions of power, "giving attention to social, political and ideological contexts ... and consequences of communication in their human effects, backed by a skeptical scrutiny of concentration of power" (Real 1986:460). But more than Michael Real's observation, communication theory needs to draw closer to *all* peoples, rather than institutions, and search for and find the laws of society which Marx collapsed into the yet indisputable base/superstructure polarity.

A thesis inclined towards history and interpretation of song lyrics may never achieve that objective, but will attempt to show that the cultural practices of the ordinary woman and man can expand theory and provide meaning for the *development* of institutions of power. Having received the knowledge of the common man and woman and the forces which express their concern, governments and national institutions can provide for the cultural development of the ordinary woman and man. Stuart Hall (1986) states that the common-sense of the masses is the terrain on which all philosophies must contend for mastery. Out of the language and other cultural practices of a people can come fuel for theory and national development.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, the free, creative spirit of Third World peoples, though unquantifiable and *non-rational* can lead researchers to sites of fruitful theorizing and intellectual expansion in communication.

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<sup>18</sup> Verhelst contends that indigenous cultures are "economic, social and political sources of life" (1990:23).

Because of its methodological implications the theoretical framework in toto will be part and parcel of the entire body of work, with theory used at various points to explain and/or bridge lyrical and parliamentary selections. In essence the theoretical framework/literature review will be expanded throughout the work and not represented here in its totality.

Each of the five chapters will carry their body of theory, but it will be seen that theory from Chapter Two will resurface in the pages of Chapter Three and Four. Essentially, though separate the bodies of theory are interrelated. There will be sub-theories to complement, expand and/or contradict the major body of theory guiding the discussion.

For example in chapter Two the body of theory on Rastafari/Dread and Black Power will be drawn from Edward Brathwaite (1980), Joseph Owens (1978), Rex Nettleford (1978), Dennis Forsythe (1983), Walter Rodney (1969), Ashley Smith (1973), Earl Augustus (1973), Frantz Fanon (1967), Simon Frith (1980), and various articles from *Caribbean Contact*.

Simon Frith (1990) is included in the major body as an extension on the case of dichotomization of thinking developed by Owens and mentioned by Fanon and Marx. In extending the argument of the relevance of Black Power, I draw on Rodney (1969), finding expansion for Rodney's views in Earl Augustus (1973). I will also draw on Marx's views on religion and religious distress in addition to views contrary to Marx from a Caribbean perspective. I will identify a series of functions or social projections of the song as postulated by Fernando Reyes Matta (1988). Reyes Matta's six functions serve as points of departure for locating the meaning of the lyrics both to the audiences and to the advancement of theory. Meaning is examined by Stuart Hall (1986) in the context of ideological practices in the media. And Hall (1975, 1980, 1982, 1986, 1988) does more. Drawing on Italian Antonio Gramsci (1971), his observations on language, language and power (Bisseret Moreau 1984; Nichols 1984), ideology (Hedbigge 1982; Mattelart 1978; O'Connor 1990), hegemony (O'Connor 1990), the historic bloc, alliance of systems, state and civil society will serve to broaden not only the concepts of the state apparatuses developed by Althusser (1976), but

provide a method for situating the class formations identified by the Calypsonians as contending for economic and political mastery.

While the state may be a zone of concentrated hegemony which has to be maintained by law and possible repression, civil society is the ground on which ideologies are contested. Civil society consists of schooling, the family, churches and religious life, cultural organizations, so-called private relations, gender, sexual and ethnic identities (Hall 1986:18). Hall's observations are, like the drum in the Creole culture, central to this thesis. But Hall's theories are processual in that they are launching pads which may not appear in bodies of work developed after the theory has been mentioned, but find reference in substance. Hall, a Jamaican and central figure in the British School of Cultural Studies will not relinquish Marx's base/superstructure. In fact in using Gramsci's concepts he steps into the terrain of the neo-Marxists in exploring more than the base/superstructure polarity. In this regard I shall examine the development of individual subjectivity, imagination and the creative spirit which Jansen (1988), Ellis (1980) and Marcuse (1974) contend Marx did not consider.

Despite the *retreats* to self-reflexivity which the Calypsonians and Musicians took, they had to deal with issues touching ownership of the means of production, development, inequity, the rising cost of living and unemployment. To clarify this tension between the internal struggles and the external reality I will draw on Hauser (1982) and Dupre (1983).

In analyzing economics and culture in chapter Three, I shall cite Neville Jayaweera (1987) who places George Lamming's definition of culture within an economic perspective. I shall also establish a framework for discussing *development* using concepts suggested by Jan Servaes (1989), Verhelst (1990), Goulet (1971), Thirlwall (1983) and others presented by Antonio Gramsci and developed by Hall (1986) on stages of class formation within certain economic parameters. When the concept of hegemony emerges I focus on the issues of moral, intellectual, cultural, economic and political unity, necessary for the realization of hegemony (Hall 1986a:15).

In chapter Four, I will show how Kadans and Calypso, the former particularly, were to change radio's colonial role (Magloire 1982; Devonish, 1986) from one of maintaining peace and stability to one of facilitating gaps in the dominant linguistic discourse. They both represented forms of cultural resistance (Cudjoe 1980; Hall 1976; Nettleford 1990).

Rabess (1989), Henderson (1988), Caudeiron (1958), Devonish (1986), Hylton (1975), and Treitler (1990) place Calypso and Kadans into perspective as originating out of the culture of the working people of the Caribbean and Dominica, and John Lent (1990) locates Caribbean popular culture within certain categories. Brown (1984) and Cuthbert (1987) suggest the implications of technologically mediated culture in a Caribbean which does not own technology. Nettleford (1978) makes an argument that the creative imagination of the people is a powerful means of production.

The proliferation of Kadans is related by performers such as Philip Mark (1990), Ophelia Marie (1990) and Fitzroy Williams (1990), while Jocelyn Guilbaut provides an insight into the progress of Zouk, the origin of which is a subject of much debate between the Kadans musicians and their more economically-minded French comrades.

Calypsonians such as "Robin", "Spencer", "Mico", "Ency" have reflected on Calypso, its role in development and its significance as a *spirit in a spiritless world*. While they comment little on the role of language, their use of English Creole and Kwéyòl serves as powerful means of communication in their many functions.

Chapter Five is an attempt to capture the essentials of the preceding chapters. In that Chapter we regard development from a dialectical perspective drawing on Dupre (1983), Hauser (1982) and Konstantinov (1982), in addition to lyrics from Calypsos of 1990 and 1991.

### **Goal of Research Project**

The goal of the research project is to demonstrate the significant role of culture in the development of a Caribbean nation. Such a view was implied by Club of Rome member

Madhi Elmandjra, who said that the best way to protect cultural identity in the Third World and the Caribbean was by making culture one of the key motors of the development process (1987:29). The statement is justified in view of the fact that the paradigms of colonialism and modernization never gave culture the attention it deserved.<sup>19</sup>

### Methodology

In *The Sociological Imagination*, C. Wright Mills said, "let every man be his own methodologist, let every man be his own theorist; let theory and method again become part of the practice of a craft" (1959:224). The researcher's theoretical background was based upon ideological predisposition for and toward the subject. In this case the researcher held the ideological predisposition for enhancing resistance of people against domination and "the use of horizontal communication on the road to liberation from the domination of the consciousness industry" (Real 1986:468; Freire 1972). Paul Willis calls for the researcher to disclose his/her attitudes toward the social world in which the research takes place, a particular view of the social relations within it and of its fundamental determinations and a notion of the analytical procedures to be used in producing the field account. The researcher would also explain the reason for a particular choice of topic (1980:90).

I operated from the perspective that the human being, if not seriously damaged, has a significant degree of freedom and can bring intelligent, *rational* principles to bear on the direction of his or her activity within nature (Heron 1985:21). Therefore, in the interviews conducted for this thesis, the interviewees were regarded as the keepers of the knowledge of

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<sup>19</sup> Servaes in *One World, Multiple Cultures* contends that "... critics of the modernization paradigm charge that the complexity of the processes of change are too often ignored, that little attention is paid to the consequences of economic, political, and cultural macro-processes on the local level, and that resistance against change and modernization cannot be explained only on the basis of traditional value orientations and norms, as many seem to imply" (1989:15).

Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth* cited colonialism as having operated by a kind of perverted logic, turning to the past of the oppressed peoples and "distorting, disfiguring and destroying" it (1963:169).

the period under study. It was not desirable to attempt to be impersonal with the artist, musicians, cultural critics and radio manager. What was needed was the technique of probing<sup>20</sup> where the interviewees words were used to inform the follow up question.

Throughout, the researcher searched for submerged texts of contradictions, inconsistencies and divergences in order to make theoretical interpretations of them. Willis who made the preceding suggestion also mentioned a period of obscurity during the research process, which he contends represents a moment of creative insight and self-reflexivity.<sup>21</sup>

It was at that point that theory took up much value: at the moment when the raw data was interrelated and interconnected with other social, political and economic phenomena. This is what Littlejohn (1989:23) calls theory's "generative function". According to Gergen, the generative functions mean,

the capacity to challenge the guiding assumptions of the culture, to raise fundamental questions regarding contemporary social life, to foster reconsideration of that which is 'taken for granted', and thereby to generate fresh alternatives for social action (1982:109). The entire body of work can be considered a methodological exercise. The

attempt to locate Dominican Calypso into a theoretical framework is probably the first of its kind to do so within a context of politics and economics, class and hegemony.

I should state that although this thesis is entitled "Language, Music and the Struggle for Political and Socio-Economic Change", the emphasis will be more on the lyrics of songs rather than the music. As was stated under the section dealing with cultural practices of the

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<sup>20</sup> See Grant McCracken, *The Long Interview*. 1988, p. 12-28.

<sup>21</sup> Says Willis, " [I]t is in these moments of crisis that there can be a distinctive relationship with a specifically Marxist form of analysis. The terrain uncovered and explored during this reflexive stage is likely to concern contradictions and tensions, both within the field of study ... and between the researcher's expectations, codes and cultural forms of understanding and those which he/she sees as creative ... However, if these moments of crisis can be seen as creative uncertainty, entered through a structured social relationship, indicating and arising from important contradictions then further understanding developed through ... a more active and reflexive method can be in the form of a reformulation and more precise articulation of ... the larger theoretical 'confession' and, in particular, a more concrete expansion of the way in which larger determinations and categories are seen to relate to the particular relationships and patterns of determination within the regional area under study" (1980:92-93).

Dominican people, the music was historically intertwined with the language used in its lyrics and needed to be described if the entire way of life of the people was to be grasped. Moreover, because the Composers, Calypsonians and Musicians are central to this thesis, the words Calypsonian, Composer and Musician will be capitalized.

A final note on the method of transcription is necessary. The Komité Pou Étid Kwéyòl in Dominica has developed a standard method for writing Kwéyòl. Through the assistance of Marcel Fontaine of the Komité, I succeeded in transcribing a few of the songs. With the use of a Kwéyòl handbook, I tried to get as close as possible to the standard set by the Komité and passed on by Marcel Fontaine. I must say that the attempt was not near perfect. This first effort at writing Kwéyòl should only encourage me to be enrolled in the diploma in Kwéyòl Studies being conducted in Dominica.

### Summary and Conclusion

From what has been said in the preceding pages, the cultural practices of the Dominican peoples were fed by streams of Arawak, Carib, French, British and primarily African traditions. Both the Arawaks and Caribs contributed linguistically. But it was the ferment on plantation society between the Africans, the French and British which produced the Kwéyòl culture, its language and the music. Strong in its African articulation, the cultural practices of Dominican peoples would survive all attempts at extermination. Kadans musicians and Calypsonians would lift the tradition to critical levels in the 1970s in response to the crisis in the nation, thereby contributing to the development of a sense of identity among the people and serving to entertain and inform them in times of distress and repression. I will show in chapter Two that those were the original functions of the two cultural practices.

Chapter Two will examine the role that Kadans and Calypso played in bringing to the people's attention the history of a Caribbean nation on the way to independence. That step in the colonies entailed a series of political and cultural upheavals. In this regard one piece

of legislation will be examined. That legislation was passed to curtail the *resurgence* of cultural practices among a group of Dominican youth called the Dreads. The ideological basis from which the Dreads functioned was not unlike a strong African tradition of resistance on plantation society. The government which had inherited the remnants of colonialism sought to wipe out those practices, maintain its working-class roots and at the same time, protect the remains of British colonial hegemony. This delicate balance between politics and culture is the subject of chapter Two.



## CHAPTER TWO

### POLITICS AND CULTURE

I myself take my cue from the calypsonians,  
from the reggae composers, from all those  
who have believed in the vision of a  
definitive Caribbean, where human  
beings can live in dignity and  
social justice  
(Rex Nettleford, 1990).

This chapter will examine the process of struggle for the centrality that the African (religious) culture demanded in Dominica between 1974 and 1978, and the response of the political directorate through one piece of legislation commonly referred to as *The Dread Act*. The 1974 Act was passed in response to the emergence of a set of cultural practices which the Patrick John administration claimed, posed a threat to public morality, public safety and public order. Those cultural practices<sup>1</sup> were adopted by the Dreads, an off-shoot of the Jamaican Rastafarians. Their ideology informed the lyrics of Kadans Musicians and Calypsonians.

In addition to the Rastafarians/Dreads, a second ideological force informed the lyrics of Kadans Musicians and Calypsonians. This force was the off-shoot of the Black Power Movement referred to as the intellectuals and activists by the Patrick John administration. In response to the *Dread Act* and the general political and cultural environment, Kadans lyrics became infused with the call for recognizing an African origin/connection<sup>2</sup>.

Lyrics of the Calypsonians adopted a stronger line of resistance to the injustices of what

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<sup>1</sup> One of those practices was in the area of language. In his delivery on *The Dread Act* John said, "Mr. Speaker, ... if I may go in slight detail in the dictionary of the Dread language .... If one of the members of this 'association' wants to walk away he says, 'let us make small motion'. If he is in possession of an illegal firearm, he tells you 'I got a piece'. If there is any person in society who is against their ideologies, you are called 'Babylon'. Immense buildings like this, the Police Station and other buildings are called 'endless concrete' (laughter from the gallery). If there is a lady for instance, who may not accept their ideologies, she is called a 'leggobeast' and, persons who have a lot of wealth, they are called the 'controller'" (*Hansard of Parliamentary Debates, Dominica*. 1974. November 19, p. 26).

<sup>2</sup> "Grammacks International" sang of the *African Connection* and *Hello Africa*. Other Dominican groups singing of Africa were "Wafrika", "Emphasis" and "Belles Combo".

Althusser categorized as the repressive and ideological state apparatuses.<sup>3</sup> This thesis is concerned with the army and police (the repressive state apparatus) and the legal system (an ideological state apparatus). When the Dreads and intellectuals and activists challenged those apparatuses, their ideas informed Kadans and Calypso.

But lest this project be restricted to the notion that the ideologies of the Rastafarians/Dreads and intellectuals and activists were the only two forces at work in the Dominican society, I will attempt to broaden the discourse to include the forces of political and economic resistance which emerged at the height of the struggle for independence. Kadans and Calypso functioned by opening gaps in the dominant discourse on human rights, freedom of expression and the general political direction of a nation breaking away from colonialism.

### Functions of Kadans and Calypso

Both Kadans and Calypso, particularly the latter, have influenced and continue to influence political thought (See Illustration No. 1, *Calypso and Resistance*). In fact Calypso as a form of expression has always had a relationship with politics.

As early as 1898, Richard Coeur de Lion who is generally credited as the first Calypsonian to write lyrics in English rather than patois,<sup>4</sup> took issue with the British colonial government in Trinidad for threatening to abolish the Port-of-Spain city Council. His Calypso became popular, marshalling enough support to force a reconsideration (Manning 1990:415). From its roots Calypso has sought to bring comfort to the oppressed and expose social injustices. In *Respect the Calypsonian* (1990), Trinidad and Tobago's "Gypsy" reminded his

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<sup>3</sup> Louis Althusser defines the repressive state apparatus as the army and police. The ideological state apparatus consists of the system of churches, the educational institutions, the family, the legal system, the trade unions and the systems of communication (1971:14-18).

<sup>4</sup> Patois as used above may mean two things, the first being a French Creole spoken in Trinidad in the nineteenth century. Traces can still be found. Patois could also be used to mean an English Creole as spoken in Jamaica and referred to as Jamaican patois. Patois as used above, means the former.

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## Illustration 1

The following demonstrates the interpretation which Calypso as a form of popular resistance receives in Dominica. The truth is the writers are in touch with and part of the events, and so are able to comment on the results of cultural resistance with much authenticity.

# Calypso and Resistance

It is said that if you want to gauge the feelings of our people on various issues, socio-economic, political, listen to the calypsoes. This was particularly so during the 1989 calypso season here, as seen not only in the national contests but in the zonal as well.

We will recall that calypso in the earlier days reflected the defiance of the masses of liberated ex-slaves under newer forms of servitude, against the decaying colonial system. Today calypso in Dominica continues in this tradition of resistance in a context of social and economic hardships arising out of foreign imposed formulas for the newly independent states of the Caribbean. Our calypso continues to stand up while other local cultural forms are reeling under the onslaught of foreign cultural penetration.

Interestingly, this year's calypsoes have evoked a number of responses. Hurricane's "Labour Leaders Gone Soft" which speaks of the betrayal of the workers by the union leaders evoked a paid statement from the Waterfront and Allied Workers Union (WAWU). It may be a

question of who de cap fit or people are very sensitive to criticism.

"Pay me and vex with me" by Dyno tells of the low wages of Dominican workers, civil servants included. Government met its civil servants on the eve of Carnival and promised to bring back the automatic increments which were stopped, as well as other



We must sing about it, you follow:

Rabbit

benefits civil servants enjoyed including housing loans, even more recently we heard of government's intentions to raise the

minimum wage, frozen for the past decade.

Then we had an issue alluded to in many calypsoes but hammered home by Cauliflower and the popular road march "Mano Comes Home" by Rabbit. We are referring to the concern over the sentences handed down by the Chief Magistrate Glenworth Emmanuel. These two songs while being banned by DBS were indeed the peoples song of defiance.. You Follow! Shortly after Carnival, Government terminated the appointment of Mr. Glenworth Emmanuel.

One will recall that "Pou Yon Koko" by Midnite Groovers in the 1970's had the effect of mobilizing public opinion against the harshness of the then Raaeda! Larceny Act where one got jailed for six months for stealing one coconut or a guava.

Our calypsonians therefore, have to be complimented for raising the people's concerns in as much as the people don't have much opportunity to do so in the mainstream media i.e. radio, TV and the press. Calypso today like cadence of the seventies must therefore continue to champion the cause of the broad masses in their struggles against hardship and oppression, and promote not only awareness but social action for change.

Calypso Season '89 has shown us that calypso is an effective means for education and raising consciousness of issues that affect the people.Ω

nation of the Calypsonian's function.

I write the songs that champion the poor man's cause  
 I who write the songs that circumvent the laws  
 From slavery to emancipation  
 I've made my contribution  
 After all these things I do  
 And I did it all for you  
 All I'm asking in my land  
 Is more respect for the Calypsonian

Gypsy's lines are grounded in fact. Patrick Hylton in an article entitled "The Politics of Caribbean Music", writes that the Calypso developed as a work song among the slaves in their daily tribulation (1975:23); thus "Gypsy's" reference to slavery and emancipation. Treitler writing in the Antiguan context described the Calypso as "the newspaper of the people, providing an often illiterate population with a rapid transmission of information" (1990:42); thus "Gypsy's" reference to the contribution made. The poor and illiterate were the slaves and off-spring of slaves in Caribbean society. Calypso which informed and comforted them was of an African origin.<sup>5</sup>

Dominican folklorist, Mable "Cissie" Caudeiron suggested the African origin of the Calypso when she expressed her preference for the "more aggressive beat" in Dominican music, "a beat that is more African than the Calypso ..." (1988:51). Caudeiron would be the last to doubt the role of a popular song such as Calypso in the lives of the masses of Dominican people. She was, however, overtly concerned about the disappearance of the distinct Dominican element: the call of the chantrelle and the response of the masqueraders or crowd.

Kadans would have pleased her because Kadans adopted Kwéyòl, the call and response of Calypso, the rhythm of the Bélé and in many instances replicated the *lapeau kabwit* or goat-skin drum in its arsenal of instruments. Moreover, when Kadans emerged in the 1970s it had not lost the history of social commentary, reconstructed and nurtured from the days of French plantation Kwéyòl society as described here by Rabess.

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<sup>5</sup> According to Hollis "Chalkdust" Liverpool, the majority of researchers have evidence "to equate the Calypso's beginning with Africa" (1986:9).

From Emancipation in 1838, the people (ex-slaves) took control and transformed the traditional slaves master's fete into a people's festival ... They also added French Creole elements. And importantly too, they turned carnival into a yearly revolt against the ruling classes (British and French), ridiculing them in song and action (1989b:1).

From as early as 1838 Creole culture was *transforming* the established principle of operation or celebration into a people's method of celebration. When the impact of Kwéyòl on an all-English radio is discussed in chapter Four, further clarification will be given to the role of Kadans as a product of the Creole society described above by Rabess. Rabess also characterized the carnival of the slaves as a revolt against the ruling classes who were ridiculed in song and action. Kadans did not as much ridicule the ruling classes as it debunked its *cold* dancing style. Kadans introduced an intimate form of dancing similar to the heat of the Bélé and to a lesser extent the Quadrille. From what has been discussed so far, indications are that both Kadans and Calypso have remained *essentially* African.<sup>6</sup>

Herskovitz described the African cultural focus as religious, in which music and dance were both recreational/entertaining and functional (1966:23-26). Following on Herskovitz, Brathwaite coined the term African (religious) culture.<sup>7</sup> That culture was carried within the individual/community, not externalized,<sup>8</sup> and so survived the extraordinary conditions of slave trade/slavery, thus its reconstruction in the Caribbean. African (religious) culture was not simply the sigh of the oppressed creature on Caribbean plantation society. It might have been the heart of a heartless world and the spirit of the spiritless condition, but it certainly was not the opium of the people. On Caribbean plantation society it was a call to political and cultural

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<sup>6</sup> "Black Music is still the common denominator (though not the only one) of most popular music today. Funk, disco, soul, rap, rock, reggae, samba, bossa nova, soca, Afro-beat, juju, highlife and Zouk all have African roots to some extent" (*Unesco Courier*. 1991. March, p. 10).

<sup>7</sup> "... African culture, like most pre-literate/oral, pre-industrial folk cultures is what European scholars would call theocentric: all aspects of life have religious reference and meaning ... there is no real distinction between 'secular' and 'sacred'" (Brathwaite 1974:13).

<sup>8</sup> Brathwaite says, "African societies did appear to European observers 'to have no culture', because there were no externally visible signs of a 'civilization'. That dance was African architecture, that history was not printed but recited, contemporary Prospero could not understand" (1974:13).

organization. Ashley Smith (1973:91) writing on the "The Religious Significance of Black Power in Caribbean Churches" cited the observations of Olive Lewin, Jamaican folk-music collector and arranger, on the functional significance of the song *Steal Away to Jesus*. According to Lewin, *Steal Away to Jesus* may have sounded innocent to the unsuspecting white overseer but in fact was a summons to the slaves to the place where political strategy was to be discussed.

Were Kadans and Calypso summons to the place where political strategy was to be discussed? They were in fact summons to a particular ideology, to use particular concepts, a language, categories, imagery of thought and system of representation to understand the origin and nature of the 1974-78 Dominican society which the Dreads called *Babylon*. In *Which One Is Me Home*, "Exile One" sang,

Kenya, Oh Kenya, Nigeria, Nigeria  
Togo, Oh Togo, Which one is me home  
I come here to work in de fire and de rain  
Which one is me home  
And I come here to work in sugar-cane  
Which one is me home (1975).

The references are clearly to the uprooting which people of African descent in the Caribbean underwent. Despite the fact that they had laboured under the elements and developed a relationship with their environment, they were *homeless*. The song functioned by leaving the audience to ask why were they *homeless*. The fact that it was delivered in English suggests that the issue of economic exploitation was directed to those who took economic decisions on behalf of a nation still within the grips of a linguistic and socio-economic hierarchy.

Two ideological frameworks informed *Which One Is Me Home*: Rastafari/Dread and the African connection, and the need for the assumption of power by Blacks in the Caribbean as propounded by the Guyanese intellectuals and activist Walter Rodney.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, there was

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<sup>9</sup> To Rodney Black Power in a Caribbean context meant three closely related things: (i) the break with imperialism which is historically white racist, (ii) the assumption of power by the Black masses in the islands and (iii) the cultural reconstruction of the society in the image of the Blacks (1969:28).

a general resistance to economic exploitation and a growing need for participation in the political decision-making process over the question of independence for the nation. Henderson himself was well aware of the history of race and economic exploitation in Caribbean societies and the role of song in drawing the people's attention to those historical realities.

It is important to note that Kadans and Calypso delivered messages of hope and gave reasons for the continuation of the struggle. In one sense they presented a cause and stated implicitly the effect. With specific reference to the lyrics quoted above from "Exile One", the cause, however, cannot be restricted to the economic, but also draws on the philosophy which guided the enslavement of one race by another and its attempts to conceal the real social contradictions of the process of exploitation by utilizing the various institutions established to mask its real intention. Kadans and Calypso sought to inscribe particular historical experiences in the spaces left unattended by colonial hegemony in its monolithic pursuit of profit. National leaders left to guard those spaces were themselves products of the said cultural environment which nurtured the lyrics of resistance. Torn between two lovers they opted for that which guaranteed their political and economic survival.

But Patrick John will never doubt the function of Kadans or Calypso. Like the Nueva Cancion of Chile, their lyrics found the support of students, workers, poverty-stricken city dwellers, trade unions, professional and many grass-roots and base organizations. When the people became conscious of the contradiction within the nation, contradictions spelt out within their own small and organized groupings, they found support in the lyrics of the two music forms. Moreover like the Nueva Cancion, Kadans and Calypso used lyrics which expressed commitment to the history of which they were part and to the destiny of the deprived.

They *functioned* in the sense that they served to bring a message of a serious political, economic, intellectual and moral nature. It is with this sense that I am concerned. The entertainment arm of Kadans and Calypso, that is, the extent to which they made others relax is the subject of another body of research. In a broad sense Kadans and Calypso served

similar functions as those of the Nueva Cancion. I will outline the functions of the Nueva Cancion as identified by Reyes Matta. The functions or social projections are not exhaustive<sup>10</sup> but they will serve to deepen what seems to be an *entertainment utility* pervading popular song in the latter part of the Twentieth century.

### Functions or Social Projections of The Popular Song

In the Nueva Cancion the function of **synthesis** emerges from lyrics capable of making a powerful appeal to the popular masses and their political vanguards. The songs (texts) interpret complex political theories and socioeconomic analyses and disseminate them in an accessible form. A function of **rupture** emerged when the music opened possibilities for expression and created gaps in the dominant discourse where the popular voice is being repressed by political and economic authoritarianism. Matta says that there is a clear creativity in the construction of language and symbols beyond the lyrics themselves, that link the identity of the artist and the people in mutual communication.

In the case of **anticipation** the expressions work for the construction of a more just and egalitarian society, synthesizing latent hopes. When the music adopts the function of **convocation to meet**, it refers to the struggles of the popular masses, their hopes, joys, their understanding of love and solidarity. It promotes the possibility of an ardent meeting. The denunciation of conditions created both nationally and internationally is achieved through the function of **denunciation**. Through the function of **confrontation**, the hegemonic forces are

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<sup>10</sup> David King Dunaway highlights a number of types into which lyrics of political music should fall. Among these are protest and complaint, aspiration for a better life, satire of governments, political and ethical themes and workers solidarity. He agrees, however, that these categories are descriptive "and reveal little of the mechanisms by which songs penetrate a culture and express sentiments that often cannot be uttered in words or print (1987:40).

What are the words *mechanisms* and *penetrate*? Solidarity among the oppressed is organic not mechanical. The popular struggle is the culture, as Fanon would remind Dunaway, and the songs of that struggle are created by the people. It does not penetrate them. No wonder they cannot be mechanized.



irritated, disturbed and provoked (1988:449-450). The Nueva Cancion invaded "the process through which societies conceive(d) of their development and define(d) their history" (Ibid. p. 452). Can less be said of Kadans and Calypso? The fact that they drew from two political and cultural currents sweeping the Caribbean is significant. They are significant because they demonstrate that non-European man is not simply a function of labour.

One frame of reference will be drawn from each of those political and cultural currents, restricting our attention at this moment to the Rastafari/Dread call for the emergence of a new and wholesome Caribbean person, and the call by activist Walter Rodney for Caribbean societies to be reconstructed in the image of the Blacks of the Caribbean. In the latter case I will touch on the role of the Caribbean church specifically.

### Rastafari/Dread and Intellectuals

George Simpson defined Dread as the power that lies within any man (1978:129). To achieve that inner power Rastafari/Dread sought to unite the immanent and the externalized, that Brathwaite (1974:12-13) identified in the African (religious) culture, and the objective and subjective consciousness<sup>11</sup> in the creation of a new person. In fact that creation of a new person was what Howard French cited in Bob Marley's message.

Marley, a Rastafarian, operated from the perspective that "the individual has intrinsic dignity" (French 1991:B1). Marley's ontological perspective was a far cry from the impression

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<sup>11</sup> This dichotomy is further revealed in the class system of Liberal societies which posit a schism between *high* culture and *low* culture. According to Sue Jansen, "it rationalizes the elitism of art for the few on the grounds that the many (cum 'masses') have abysmal taste. It deflects attention away from the fact that 'mass culture' is produced for the people, not by the people. It papers over the dirty little secret that 'mass culture' is manufactured by elites to make money and to inhibit the development of authentic cultures of resistance among members of the underprivileged classes of Liberal societies" (1988:18-19).

Simon Frith in the Introduction to *World Music, Politics and Social Change* suggested to a lesser extent that need to dichotomize. "Colonialism did not change the purpose of West African music, ... but rather, introduced new ideological elements to it - among other things, the colonialists introduced the concept of 'traditional' music to legitimate their own claims to progress and modernity" (1989:10).

held by Europeans and non-European nationals in the colonies. Like Frantz Fanon, Rastafari/Dreads believed that such dignity could be realized when the Black person united the subjective and the objective.<sup>12</sup> Joseph Owens in an article entitled "Marx, Christ and Rasta" contended that the two are not opposed.

The purely subjective individual would be at loss in dealing with the external world. The purely objective individual would be at loss in dealing with his/her internal universe. Every human being must develop both, and develop these according to true consciousness (1978:2).

Rasta regarded both Church and State as institutions practising false consciousness. The plantation, the law courts, the legislative assembly and the churches in Caribbean society were in fact the chief agencies used to divest the African of her/his ancestral heritage and culture (Marshall 1981:xii).

Jamaican Rastafarian, Bunny Wailer, in an album entitled *Blackheart Man* sought to redress the beliefs instilled by the Churches on plantation society while they facilitated economic exploitation. Christian prophets who were always presented as White were given Black personages. In 1974, he sang,

Remember Jeremiah children, he was a Rastaman  
Or even Isaiah, he was a Rastaman  
Moses in the pit of mud, he was a Rastaman  
Trodding from Bozrak with his garments dipped in blood  
He was a Rastaman.

Caribbean people needed to find a sense of place, a connection in the cosmological scheme of things. They also needed to assume economic and political power (objective) and return to the power of the inner person (subjective), uniting the two in a practice which was not anathema to the secular and sacred combination of the African (religious) culture.

But there were forces opposed to that process of unity, forces such as imperialist/bourgeois society, big government, big religion, big labour and the pre-packaged

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<sup>12</sup> "The black man must wage his struggle on both levels ... reality, for once, requires a total understanding. On the objective level, as on the subjective level, a solution has to be found" (Fanon 1967:13).

domestic culture of high fashion, consumer goods and mindless television (Owens 1978:2). While spurning and condemning those forces, Rastafari/Dread introduced what Nettleford referred to as "a conscious change of vocabulary and syntax" (1978:16) as part of the politics of protest. In using *Jah* in the place of *God*, they challenged the Church's authority in deciding the ideological environment. Also, because a change in religion and language was the most powerful method of altering the character and manner of a nation (and race) (Devonish 1986:47), *their transformation of the centrality - God - into Jah, could be considered an attack on Church and by extension, the God-fearing State.*

Both Rastafarianism/Dread and Black Power drew the responses of the Caribbean Conference of Churches (CCC), which from its inception had struggled with the need to re-examine its role in the post-colonial Caribbean. The CCC initiated Conferences and extensive discourse on the subject of a Caribbean theology. Writing in the 1970s, Ashley Smith<sup>13</sup> stated that "the Church in the Caribbean as elsewhere has conformed too closely to the theory that non-European man is incapable of autonomous action and high-level administrative responsibility" (1973:85). In Smith's observation it is possible to identify calls for the emergence of a new Caribbean person who believes in the power of the inner self and is prepared to shatter the belief that non-European man can be nothing but a source of labour. That single function as a source of labour had destroyed the dignity of the Black person.

"Exile One" would be the first to suggest the destructive practices and injustices of the colonial economic system. In 1976 they sang in *Twavay Pou Ayen* (Work for Nothing),

Mwenu planté kann, mwen planté tabak sann wépoze  
 Yo batt mwen yo maltwété mwen on lò  
 Apwé yo di awété planté kann  
 Sa pa en tabb, mé kann ka vann

I planted cane and tobacco without resting (ceaselessly)  
 I was beaten and terribly ill-treated  
 After they said stop planting cane  
 There was none on the table, but cane was still being sold.

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<sup>13</sup> Ashley Smith was then adviser to the Prime Minister of Jamaica in Church-State Affairs.

It was this history of plantation society and its effect on the entire way of life of the people of the region that the Conference of Churches was forced to consider. "Exile One" drew on the ideological frames of Black Power in highlighting the economic exploitation as sung in the last two lines.

The sugar that was being sold was in fact a product of value - labour - but that commodity held no further relationship with the labour force. It was this that Karl Marx called alienation. It was also this alienation that Earl Augustus felt the Black Power Movement was seeking to obliterate in its call for existential authenticity, corporate identity, economic justice and political autonomy (1973:109-113).

Such was the regional ideological environment which further informed Kadans Musicians and Calypsonians, working in a society where Dreads were accused of raiding gardens, shacks and homes and where the Premier was requesting financial assistance from Whitehall to exterminate them.<sup>14</sup> The society was *stirred* into a state of fear. *Twavay*, the organ of the Movement For New Dominica (the intellectuals and activists) decried "the mass-hysteria, Lougarou-hunting, Jumbie search and paranoia that Patrick. R. John is creating and leading" (Honeychurch 1984:189). Third nominated member of the Dominica Freedom Party Eugenia Charles placed the problem of the Dreads in a larger perspective, stating that there were several categories of Dreads,<sup>15</sup> and the problem was not restricted to the activities of intellectuals.

It is in this context that the Act To Make Provision For The Suppression Of Societies

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<sup>14</sup> Greg Chamberlain. 1974. "Island Gunning for the Dreads". *The Observer*. London, December 27.

<sup>15</sup> According to Eugenia Charles, there was the Dread who arose because of unemployment, the Dread created by frustration and those who arose because of neglect of family life. There was also the Dread who had a good family life, and who, because of the adherence to bad companions joined the society. There were Dreads who were in fact criminals and those who became Dread through the abuse of drugs and through brain-washing (*Hansard of Parliamentary Debates, Dominica*. 1974. November 19, p. 31).

Established For Unlawful Purposes And For The Better Preservation Of Public Safety, Public Order And Public Morality, will be examined. It was simply called The Dread Act.

### The Dread Act and Lyrics

The Prohibited and Unlawful Associations and Societies Act was described as one of "the most serious pieces of legislation ever introduced in this House" (Pat Stevens 1977:43). Honeychurch identified a headline in the liberal British newspaper, *The Guardian*: "Where long hair is a shooting matter" (1984:190). In 1975, "Chubby", a Dread, utilized the rhythmic contents of Kadans to launch an attack on the repressive nature of the legislation.

Gadé déba ki en péyi-a, yo passé om lwa k'afekté nou  
 Pou nou mashé nou en tje soté  
 Nou pasa menm ki palé en pey-a nou  
 Ay manma, gadé mizè nou ka wè  
 Woye papa, gaé kouma nou ka souffè  
 Pou chivé nou bondyé ba nou  
 Ka pwenn lajol si nou pa penwen-y

Look at trouble in the country  
 They've passed a law (which is affecting us)  
 When we walk we are so frightened  
 We cannot even speak in our own country  
 Oh Mama look at misery we are seeing  
 Oh Papa look at how we are suffering  
 For our hair that God gave to us  
 We are jailed if its not combed/cut.

The song was entitled *Lwa K' Afekté Nou* (The Law is Affecting Us). "Chubby" was dealing with two major issues in his song. The first was the general state of repression being experienced by the Dominican people. The second was the response of the law to a method of cultural expression which he regarded as legitimate and within the rights of every man, woman and child.<sup>16</sup> In essence he was uniting the general with the individual plight. He drew the attention of his audience by expressing the song in Kwéyòl. The cultural significance of

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<sup>16</sup> "I know for a right ... it is not right for a man to cut his hair. A man born from God and God is creation. So you suppose to live up as a man, that is why I myself feel that wasn't a law, so I sing about it" (Interview 1990, September).

the traditional family was brought into focus, where the call was usually made to the mother and father in times of distress.<sup>17</sup> "Chubby" skillfully united particular social practices and relations with particular structures of meaning to achieve what Hall regarded as an ideological formation (Grossberg 1986b:67). At the heart of "Chubby's" presentation was the philosophy of Dread/Rastafari.

While "Chubby's" language would be grasped by the majority Kwéyòl population, the Act was masked in the jargon of a legal apparatus which provided protection not only for the repressive nature of the keepers of the law, but subtly sought to maintain order and morality in a society where opportunity for the poor was a function of name, colour and language. Indeed, the Act's definitions of a *society* and an *association* would be restricted to the educated, the literate and members of parliament. The *Dread Act* (1974) defined a *society* as,

any group or association of persons intended to be permanent or long-standing for the purposes of sharing and propagating an ideology and unlawful objective, whose members distinguish themselves by a uniform, or by their mode of dress or manner of wearing their hair.

An *association* was defined as,

any group or body of persons sharing common beliefs, practices and ideologies who unite either temporarily or permanently to achieve a common unlawful objective.

Consistent with the definitions of ideology being used in this thesis, the word ideology as used in the Act is subject to examination. Stuart Hall defines ideology as,

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<sup>17</sup> The Rastafarian/Dread ideology propagated a special respect for the parents. The practice developed by Rastafarians of calling their mother *the Old Queen* and their father *the Old Man* should not be taken to mean they were old and therefore, invaluable. *Old* represented a source of wisdom. The usage would percolate through the society and even became accepted by the parents.

Compare this with the present attitudes of youth in the United States to their parents. Christopher Lasch expands his observations on the *youth emphasis* of American culture by examining the emphasis of the entertainment world on youthfulness, the denigration of age and the process of aging (See *Culture of Narcissism*. 1979, pp. 354-366). For "Chubby", the Old Queens and the Old Men were central to his understanding of the violation of human rights and the system's perpetuation of suffering.

the concepts, languages, categories, imagery of thought and the system of representations which different classes *and social groups* in society deploy to make sense of, define, figure out and render intelligible the way society works (1986a:12, emphasis mine).

Based on Hall's definition and Chubby's cry of the absence of freedom, it would appear that the Act came close to representing a violation of the human right to think. More specifically, it can be said that social groups were permitted to *ideologize as long as the content of such an exercise was within the ideological boundaries prescribed by the legacy of colonialism*. And that legacy had historically restricted the uniting of an inner African reality with an objective examination of the real contradictions of labour and capital. It was this false consciousness which the intellectuals and activists and Rastafari/Dread spurned.

The people were not free. Colonial freedom was defined within the boundaries of an ideology founded on the exploitation of labour. What could not be defined and controlled was the immanence and periodic emergence of the African (religious) culture. "Chubby" in support of the call for freedom of expression of the feelings and possibilities of that culture utilized the function of **confrontation**, projecting images consistent with the struggles of the neglected masses who had not been provided for in the legal history of the nation. He was also indirectly invading the process through which the society conceived of its development and defined its history (Matta 1988:452) through the legal system. He asked,

Poukwa nou passa ni liberté  
Kon tout lezot moun a pey-a yo  
Pli nou fè byen sè mal nou ka wè  
Lajol Donmnik sé ani pou nou malawé

Why can't we (have) be free(dom)  
Like all other persons in their county  
The more good we do the worst we see  
Dominica's laws are against the poor

"Chubby" continued to unite the particular and the general, using the signifier *nou*, to represent both the unlawful societies and associations. But just when he appears to be restricting the case of freedom to those two groups, he launches into the general plight of the Dominican people who are *called* on to reflect on the good they had done (labour) and the subsequent

*reward*. The Musician was not the only one to view the problem in a larger context.

In Parliament, third nominated member Eugenia Charles did not restrict her debate to the Dread issue, but sought broader solutions to the ills of a disintegrating political culture. She suggested the need for an educational campaign, compulsory national service to the community, an employment agency, the rapid injection of capital into the community, a stern censorship of films, a real effort to stamp out narcotics and increased security at the prisons (*Hansard of Parliamentary Debates Dominica*. 1977. November 19, p. 33-34). Here, Charles was operating as shadow-Premier/Prime Minister. She like the Labour Party believed in compulsory national service and increased security at the prisons.

The minister for education was to state that the developed countries were "puzzled" by the breakdown of authority. "The cinema is one of the primary forces ... polluting the minds of young people *all over the world* ... highlighting violence and sex. *Immoral literature in my mind, should have been added to this*" (Ibid. p. 48 emphasis mine). In driving the situation to extremes, Premier John stated in regard to the Dreads, "the idea of eating only vegetables and ground provisions ... is done with an endeavour to get the body accustomed to the jungle way of life" (Ibid. p. 57).

The association, like the society, only had to share "common beliefs, practices and ideologies" (Section 2) to be arrested. When arrested they were not entitled to bail (Section 6 -(1)). And no proceedings, either criminal or civil could be brought "or maintained against any member of the Police Force for any action taken in performance of his duties" under the Act ((Section 10 - (3)). Masked behind the legal apparatus was a political system and its class formation which sought to resist any attempts at reconstituting their ideological formation. Enshrined in the law were clauses which protected the keepers of the law and by extension the equilibrium of the semi-colony.

By February 1975 Calypsonians were crying *brutality*. Police activity had intensified against both Dreads and civilians who were suspected of harbouring Dreads. In *Tell Me Why*,



"Spider" sang,

In the history of our country,  
First time I see so much brutality  
Up to now there's no unity  
In this community  
Oh, it so bad, everybody looking sad  
Oh, it's a shame, tell me who we all must blame

Why, tell me why, Oh tell me why  
Please, please tell me why  
Why they want to make Dominicans cry  
Tell me why, please, please tell me why  
Why we always put water in their eyes  
Oh Lord, not this time  
We can't permit no more crime  
And if you understand, let me see you raise your hand.

There was in fact brutality and very little, if any, recourse to justice. "Spider's" mention of the *history* of Dominica was a subject of much debate within the ideological environment created by the intellectuals and activists in the 1970s. While they were succeeding in that pedagogic exercise, the administration's efforts to unite the *community* did not seem to be bearing fruit. In fact the administration continued to propagate what Stuart Hall refers to as an imaginary unity. In John's many radio addresses during that time of crisis, he often appealed to the community, the nation, public opinion, the general interest, and the public will (Hall 1982b:337). Like "Chubby", the administration made appeals to the general. The latter sought to justify its actions by drawing on public sentiments while *masking* its ambivalence toward a repressive colonial apparatus. In the words of American singer Mick Jagger, the administration was "caught between a rock and a hard place:" between the legal instruments of the colonial power and the voice of the working people which had placed it in power in the first place. But the *real unity* - the community - was *sad*. The sons and daughters of the middle-upper class were being drawn into the practices and beliefs of Rastafarianism/Dread. The sons and daughters of the poor were being beaten or shot. Opposition was increasing within parliament, and the opposition political party was poised for the outbreak of public outrage in order to place itself as the party to lead the country into independence.

"Spider" *called* on the audience to *respond* if they understood the source of the *crime*. The fact that "Spider" called on the audience/community to identify *crime*, a role played by the courts of law, suggested his attempts to locate the power of right and wrong within the entire body politic. Moreover, he sought to **rupture** the dominant discourse of the legal system. But there was greater ferment taking place within the repressive state apparatus.

In November 1975 an Act was passed for the establishment of a full-time defence force to take over the military duties usually performed by the police. John assumed the rank of Colonel in direct command of the activities of the army. The police were denigrated. In his 1976 Calypso, police officer/Calypsonian "Dino" sought to interpret the Colonel's actions.

You should hear the talk all around the town  
 They say the Premier took all police guns  
 They say he clean up de whole armoury  
 And leave de force empty  
 But the public would like to know  
 Why de Premier acting so  
 He show indication that he doe want *Babylon*  
 He say he hear police going to strike  
 So he was left in fright  
 That's why he clean de armoury  
 An' sen' de guns in de cemetery (emphasis mine)

"Dino" attempted to break down complex political decisions and make them accessible to the audience. This was the function of **synthesis** being conducted by an insider. Moreover, he rooted his composition within the framework of the emerging economic resistance which was being adopted by the trade unions. The Colonel did not as might be superficially extracted from "Dino's" last line, bury the instruments of death. In fact, they were resurrected in the hands of John's army. But there were voices within the ranks of the police force prepared to speak on in a language which equated the determination of rising political and economic blocs for participation and justice in the *democratic* process.

Relinquishing the formal linguistic code of law enforcement, police officer/Calypsonian Alleyne adopted what Nettleford called a "conscious change of vocabulary and syntax" (1978:16). Here is an excerpt from an interview with Alleyne, one-time body guard of Prime

Minister John.

Alleyne: For example, one of the songs I wrote, *Rasta Fin' Himself*. In the lyrics I said,

Everybody is talking cause Rasta say he fin' himself  
 Everybody's watching cause Rasta say he fin' himself  
 But look how cool I-Man feel here  
 Since I fin' myself  
 Look how much school I get here since I fin' myself

It was just a series of messages saying the system is falling. Rasta say he fin' himself, Rasta a-suffer, so Rasta say he fin' himself. It was almost a song saying I'm sorry, I've taken enough. This is the time I'm seeing what is happening to a group of people in our society unjustifiably and I am crossing the line. I cut the LP two months after I left the force.

Interviewer: Why unjustifiably?

Alleyne: At that time a man who is wearing Dread locks could be picked up by the police. It was the law of the land that you could pick him up, cut his locks, which I consider now an assault, you take him to the magistrate and automatically, he would be entitled to go to jail for nine months. It was almost like the equivalence of the Gun Court Law in Jamaica. As a police officer who loved the police force, who loved the society, who loved my civilian friends, I found that it was not a fair thing to do ... I don't consider locks something derogatory. I consider it a trait of African heritage (Interview 1990, September).

Alleyne was one of many *civilians* to take a stand! By Carnival 1976 the vocabulary of the Dreads had percolated into the society, intensifying the politics of protest and pitting those who subtly condoned the Dread action against those who condemned them. The former group saw the opportunity for the acceleration of their counter-hegemonic interests, while the latter guarded both the administration and the remains of colonial hegemony which had instilled the ideology of order, morality and safety. It is still a matter of debate whether the *sense of responsibility* that the Calypsonians and Musicians adopted in their interpretation of those social schisms was a product of colonialism or a function of the African (religious) culture. Such responsibility was exemplified when Calypsonians "Spider" and "Mico" observed that those in the struggle were their own people, and at times the Dreads were truly perpetrating acts of terrorism. For example, the police officer was still being referred to publicly as *Babylon*, despite the fact that officers such as Alleyne and Calypsonian "Dino" had revealed the cracks within the walls of

that *Babylon*. "Spider", a Calypsonian described by Denis Joseph as "exceptionally good",<sup>18</sup> was not pleased with the categorization. In truth the popular song needed to caution the masses at times.

If we sit and then criticize  
We all for sure will be antagonized  
Take for instance a black policeman  
We call him *Babylon*  
But you should know well they are all our very best  
But don't take me wrong brutality must be drowned (*Tell Me Why*, 1975).

Here Spider was conducting a criticism of the categories utilized by his *audience*. That sense of *reasonable responsibility* was also echoed by "Mico" who criticized the futility of the Dread action in capturing two young women, contending that the Dread had made it big in Dominica's history "but what did it profit, he dead" (*Natty Dread You*, 1977). "Mico's" African (religious) orientation did not always catch the attention of the judges.<sup>19</sup>

I remember around dem times around the capital, the talks even among the government officials ... they used to watch me as anti-government. Fans that would hear de talk would show me that I'm a real good Calypsonian, but in this country the government would never allow me to carry a crown (Roosevelt "Mico" Williams. Interview. September 1990).

By 1977 "Mico" was utilizing the images of Rastafari/Dread, images consistent with the counter-revolutionary duality of "Jeezus" and "Caesar" (Owens 1978:2). He launched a subtle attack on methods of censorship which drew their categories from the alienating culture of *Babylon* and *Caesar*. Caesar was regarded as an accomplice in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ who Rastafari/Dread believed came from the line of Solomon. Moreover, Haile Selassie, God of the Rastafarians/Dreads was said to have come from the line of Solomon. Rastafari/Dread

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<sup>18</sup> Denis Joseph is a musician, producer and businessman. He was manager of the Dominica Broadcasting Corporation from 1974-78, and one of Dominica's most prolific song-writers. "Spider's" songs were "more serious, deeper, well articulated ... which is really the mark of a deeper artist" (Interview. September 1990).

<sup>19</sup> The judges here refer to the persons who decided at the annual calypso competitions which Calypsos dealt best with lyrics, melody and presentation. These were the three categories used for judging the good calypso. Calypsonians presented two songs at all competitions, one which was topical (functional) and the other more entertaining (for the road march).

were convinced that they were proclaiming a truth! "Mico" sang,

I belong to Jehovah, I never like the system of Caesar  
I was born in Dominica, if I never win the Crown  
It doesn't matter.

"Mico's" message implies a major division between his vision and that of the Calypso judges who were 100% city-based. The subject of town-country dichotomy will be discussed more fully in chapter Three. Suffice it to say that he was committed to the Dread ideology with its deep African (religious) roots. And he was not an isolate in that regard. For example, in 1977 "Spider's" philosophical introduction to *Dear John*<sup>20</sup> shared in the (religious) cultural element.

Oh world of envy, strife and shame  
How long must man suffer such pain  
Unrighteousness, unhappiness,  
Plus poverty misery and sorrow  
Don't know what will be tomorrow  
Dear John, Dear John, I see corruption  
Dreads kidnapping and killing  
Causing confusion and more starvation in the land

Here was the need for the balance of forces. As artists committed to the plight of the oppressed, both "Spider" and "Mico" wanted public order, public safety and public morality, but they did not see the solution to the problem in the increased spending on the defence force or police.<sup>21</sup> Neither did they see it in brutality on the part of the defence force and police nor on the part of the Dreads, who had in fact lost part of the sympathy held for them by the public after they captured two young women in the Portsmouth area.

While the community was taken back by the Dread action, it was not prepared to give its support to the 1974-78 government, neither was it wholly prepared to assist the police and

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<sup>20</sup> "Spider" won the crown that year and was crowned by Patrick John himself. (Patrick John. Interview. September 1990).

<sup>21</sup> The 1974 budget provided \$1.2 million for Law and Order, while Agriculture received \$1.3 million. Estimates for the financial year ending June 30, allocated \$6.3 million to Social Services, and while Agriculture remained at \$1.3 million, Law and Order increased by \$.2 million from \$1.2 million (*Hansard of Parliamentary Debates, Dominica*. 1975. August 13, 19, pp. 20-21).

defence force in their search for the Dreads and those who aided and abetted them. It was this intervening sense of reason, if not justice, that the Calypsonians had envisaged and sought to balance as the community went into clearer divisions over the Dread issue. There was, however, no doubt that a major organized force was harbouring sentiments which were not restricted to the Dread issue. That "system of alliances" (Hall 1986a:16) was not composed solely of the middle-class factions of the opposition Dominica Freedom Party, but comprised sections of the professional groups, the trade unions which represented the workers, the working class itself, business people, financiers and commercial interests. A formidable power was moving against a *historic bloc*. Hall defined a historic bloc as that which leads in a period of hegemony. Says Hall,

The "leading elements" in a historic block may be only one fraction of the dominant economic class - e.g., finance rather than industrial capital; national rather than international capital. Associated with it, within the "bloc", will be strata of the subaltern and dominated classes, who have been won over by specific concessions and compromises and who form part of the social constellation but in a subordinate role (1986a:15).

The government was prepared to use force to maintain what it assumed was a period of moral, intellectual and political unity, drawing on the support received at the 1975 elections and the rewards it was reaping in the concessions and compromises made not only to its working class supporters and commercial interests at home, but to international financiers abroad.

"King Shakey" in *I Want To Know* (1977) suggested the broadening of the discourse on the issues of political development, one of those issues being freedom of expression.

My thoughts I relieve, I am not aggressive  
But fans telling me all those in power  
Will give you pressure  
If you criticize your country  
I told them stop here, look everywhere  
Our island is so far behind  
So much to unfold, we need to be bold  
To make Dominica climb (*I Want To Know*, 1977).

"King Shakey" was committed to the struggle of the oppressed! His call for democratic participation and for creating gaps in the dominant discourse, was evident in the crowd

response to *I Want To Know*. "Shakey" also adopted the function of *synthesis* in making a powerful appeal to the popular masses and their political vanguard. The roaring responses suggested a collectivity of emotions - *convocation to meet* - "where the whole became greater than the sum of its parts" (Matta 1988:450), and *moments of unfolding*<sup>22</sup> were achieved. This placement of *all into one*, into an *unquantifiable harmony* was often achieved by King Shakey.

In his *second* song at the 1977 competition he expressed that desire to *clean up* the old forces, a function that Matta did not identify. The song signalled *renunciation*, where the purge of the entire political system was necessary. *It called for a loosening of the concentrated hegemony of state policies*. In that song "King Shakey" brought together the poor (Ugly)<sup>23</sup>, the rich (the Governor), the Dread (Tumba Galloway),<sup>24</sup> himself and the intellectuals into one *sacred and secular* feast. He served the functions of priest, healer, philosopher, storyteller, poet, diviner, politician and prophet all in one.<sup>25</sup> The song harked back to the French plantation society, ridiculing the Rich, and lifting the Poor into *disordered perfection*. He blended Kwéyòl and English in a unity of opposites, juxtaposing *poverty* with

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<sup>22</sup> Defined here as a moment of mutual communication where what the artist projected as his interpretation was received concordantly by the audience.

<sup>23</sup> A town character usually dressed in very dirty rags. Patrick John himself intimated that when the law was being debated in parliament, the main issue was the definition of a 'Dread'. With his attorney general out of state at the time he was left to (re)construct a law in parliament. According to him, "the law as it existed could have made Ugly a Dread, because of his unkempt clothing". In fact "Shakey" was sufficiently perceptive to include Ugly in his *synthesis*, along with Tumba, the Dread.

<sup>24</sup> The Dread who gave the most difficulty to the Police and Defence Force in their search for him throughout the mountains of Dominica. It is said that even when he was shot, he crossed a swamp of some 500 yards at immense running speed and strength. He was reminiscent of the 19th. century Dominican Maroons, who launched attacks on large British plantation societies. Even when persons could be arrested and imprisoned for harbouring and abetting him, he is known to have received assistance by many in his Northern community. The government wanted him dead or alive with a reward of \$5,000 to anyone who succeeded. It is not known whether that reward was shared among the members of the armed forces who finally ended his life, a death which lead Calypsonian "King Shakey" to sing, "Lord, how I cried, the day Ras Tumba died".

<sup>25</sup> Brathwaite's observation on the secular and sacred nature of African (religious) culture (p. 13).

*Ugly, swimming pools and t'ings of wool with Sir Louis, and lapeau kabwit with Tumba.* His song was rightly entitled *Dayba Pou Dayba* (Trouble For Trouble).<sup>26</sup> Here was an important "means of production for much that brings meaning and purpose to human life" (Nettleford 1978:xvii).

But by late 1977 and early 1978 the Act had become subsumed in the broader issues of political and economic resistance. The opposition political party was challenging the administration's preparedness to take the country into independence. The trade unions were

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<sup>26</sup> "King Shakey's" song is being presented here in its entirety, because of its success at uniting all the elements of the African (religious) culture. Calypsonian "Robin" agreed that "Shakey's" *Dayba Pou Dayba* changed the land/sound/scape of Calypso. [ind. l = line indecipherable]

Poverty, misery, most people complaining  
No money, they hungry, they cannot stand that scene  
Since when Christmas come, they wondering how long  
They will be so strong as to sing a different song

#### CHORUS

But when Carnaval come, tempo shaking the town  
People from everywhere looking like they ain' care  
Sa ki déjà pléwé, pa mélé, yo ka soté  
Even Ugly Willy, dancing up sexily  
Ugly, shaking up he wais' (whining)  
Jammin' in de place (whining)  
Drinking all he rum an' he day having he fun  
Afos ei pawé, Ugly paka jwé, Ugly vey ou la  
Sé dayba pou dayba.

Good business, happiness, it have a different set  
With swimming pool, t'ings dat wool, dey ain' see misery yet  
When dey hear of Carnaval, like dey ain' care at al'

(ind. line)

In de t'ing dey will never fall

#### CHORUS

But den de j'ouvé come, they want to have their fun  
Is now dey realize they missing part of the prize  
(ind. words) yo ka lagjé, yo ka jété westé  
Imagine de Governor rolling like he ain' care  
Shakin' up he wais', jammin' in de place  
Drinkin' all he rum and he day having he fun  
Afos ei pawé, Sir Louis paka jwé, Sir Louis vey ou la  
Sé dayba pou dayba.

Frustration, migration, another group done shout  
Ka'an have fun, lewwe run, East, West, North and South  
De doctors go their way, musicians will not stay  
Bougar go away, take a free trip to Galloway

#### CHORUS

But then Carnaval come, tempo shaking de town  
Coming from all around is lapeau kabwit jump up  
Tout sa ki té allé, oblijé kouwi vèwé  
With us as we jumping, imagine Tumba streaking.



fomenting labour protests, and the administration was riddled with charges of corruption. Civil society was in crisis.

Gramsci defined civil society - the school, church, religious life, cultural organizations, even private relations, as the "trenches and 'permanent' fortifications" (1971:243) of hegemony. When the Act stated, therefore, that "it shall be an offence to harbour or recruit in the membership of any unlawful society any child or young person below the age of 18 years" (Section, 7 - (1), or made it illegal to "aid and abet" an escapee (Section 5 (3), the relatives of Dreads were liable to be arrested. Parents of the urban youth and those of the many rural Dreads who provided for their economic well-being,<sup>27</sup> were liable to be arrested. There was a hegemonic crisis. The Calypsonian "Robin" united the political issue of independence with the body of furor which had emerged from 1974 over the legal system and manifested in the Dread Act and others to be mentioned in subsequent chapters. He summed up the period in his song *Independence* in 1978.

With Independence, will we have a next Amin<sup>28</sup>  
 With Independence, or will they just keep promising  
 With Independence, will we have democracy  
 With Independence, or will they pass harsh laws on 'we'<sup>29</sup>

While "Robin" was prepared to look at the *possibilities* for the growth and development of a democratic nation, Norman "Ency" Cyrille knew exactly who he wanted to take the country

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<sup>27</sup> It is known in rural communities as a saying that the revenue from planting and selling marijuana built many houses and sheltered many of the grand-mothers and fathers. At one time the Dreads numbered 200 but could be more, as the administration knew very little of their holdings.

What is more important though was the adoption of many of the practices of the Dreads in civil society. The hairstyles of the women changed from being *done* with the packaged perm to plaits. The banana as a fruit became more acceptable in all society and was no longer regarded as the food of the poor. Vegetables were accepted into the diet ("ital"), and the use of salt was decreased. So in fact "Chubby's" *Milk and Honey* which called for the return to the traditional ways of eating what was grown and doing it wisely, was meaningful as will be seen when the economic is discussed in chapter Three.

<sup>28</sup> Reference to Ugandan leader Idi Amin, known for his mass slaughtering practices.

<sup>29</sup> 'We' meaning us.

into independence. He called on the people to march together, fight together "and some day we shall overcome" - a **convocation to meet**. "The freedom ship is waiting, just there for the taking, I shouldn't tell you so, but the next stop is for freedom" (*Dominica Party*, 1978). Despite his obvious political partisanship, "Ency" attempted to articulate the *moments* and *hopes* of what the people held to be true - freedom - in its broadest sense. That *freedom* which transcended political party interests represented the full expression of the African (religious) culture.

### Summary and Conclusion

In summary, it can be said that both Kadans musicians and Calypsonians attempted to address the historical and current issues affecting the Dominican population between 1974 and 1978. Kadans drew on the ideology of Rastafarianism/Dread and Black Power to construct a critique of the political and cultural consciousness of the Dominican society in view of its experience of colonialism. In using Kwéyòl they gave legitimacy to the language of the majority, a language despised and disregarded by the middle and upper classes. Moreover, they entertained and informed the masses in a language and music which held meaning in their everyday life and material existence. They gave them a sense of place and purpose in the political and cultural scheme of things by drawing on the historical and musical dimensions of an African (religious) culture. It was a culture which regarded the human being as having an intrinsic dignity. To utilize the language of the people to speak and sing of their issues was to give meaning and wings to that repressed dignity.

Calypso described earlier on as the newspaper of the poor and illiterate, succeeded most in adopting the functions of **rupture** (opening gaps in the dominant parliamentary discourse), **synthesis** (in breaking down complex political issues that the people might understand), and **convocation to meet** (in giving them hope for a better outcome to the misery and brutality). In its call and response techniques, its use of Kwéyòl and its increased resistance to injustice,

Calypso drew on the original functions of the African song, albeit more vehemently and scathingly.

Through critical cultural and political perspectives introduced into the Dominican society by Rastafari/Dread and the intellectuals and activists respectively, issues of identity, intellectual and moral unity were debated in parliament within the context of the Dominican reality. In addition, economic and political resistance adopted by the trade unions and opposition parties respectively, informed Kadans and Calypso. The fact that the political system could activate legal instruments in its defence, suggests that beneath that action were other zones of insecurity which needed to be forcefully defended. Political ideology fed into the stream of economic activity and the government was prepared through legislation to extract maximum revenue from all sources which generated capital. Drawing on an adaptation of Marxist-Leninist philosophy, the government took to taxing the *rich*. And those city-based forces, in defence of their property and class interests responded through economic and political resistance. What did the Calypsonians reveal about the economic functions of the society?

It will be argued in chapter Three that in lyricizing about the economic and cultural issues in Dominica, the Calypsonians succeeded in uncovering social class patterns founded on inequalities operative from deep fissures of colonial hegemony in civil society. Their final product in song succeeded in drawing the attention of the masses to the financial irresponsibility of the 1974-78 government, but it did not identify the emerging class interests and their long history of eagerness to own the means of production. It will also be argued that the Calypsonians were restricted to a city-specificity in their compositions.

Chapter Three will be entitled Economics and Culture. In that chapter Kadans lyrics will not be drawn on extensively. The Musicians were not as close to Dominica's economic condition as the Calypsonians, except for "Chubby" who was usually in Dominica when not recording in the French departments.

## CHAPTER THREE

### ECONOMICS AND CULTURE

Everybody asking where de misery coming from  
So much shortage and shortage, shortage in de town  
Oh Lord, what a t'ing,  
We got shortage from rice down to gasoline

I ain' got no land to grow me breadfruit  
I ain' got o donkey to substitute  
I can't die of starvation  
I got to feed all me children  
I going to de obeahman  
(Spencer, *Shortage*, 1974).

The preceding chapter has indicated an interconnectedness, if not an interdependence between Dominica's political development and its artistic expression. Political decision-making was subject to intense scrutiny by the artists in their continuous reflection on the history of colonialism, its exploitative practices and its belief in keeping the labour force subjected to laws through the manipulation of the ideological state apparatus. Nurturing their contributions within the ideological framework of Rastafarianism/Dread and Black Power, the artists uncovered a corpus of repressed ideas necessary for the future development of a Dominican political culture and identity.

In this chapter, I will attempt to interpret the Calypsonians contribution to the economic development of Dominica keeping in mind that the economic was subject to both the political objectives of the city-based administration and populace, and the ingenuity and self-reliant nature of the rural-based Dominican people.<sup>1</sup>

The independent-minded nature of the rural folk gave them a completely different perspective on development from the urban folk who, traditionally, had depended on

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<sup>1</sup> "Until recently Dominican villages were isolated communities living much within themselves, separated from other areas by steep mountains, raging torrents and narrow tracks. What emerged as a result was a firmly peasant-based society, self-reliant and very independent-minded, yet linked by a strong family and community spirit" (Honeychurch 1988:11).

The individual and community were their own law in regard to the environment, particularly through their agricultural practices. For example, wood cleared for planting was burnt as charcoal for fuel. Rivers were not polluted, as they were the source of protein in fish. A wide variety of herbs were used in healing, and wildlife was hunted in proportion to need.

government to take all initiatives. The urban folk were also not in control of the agricultural resources that rural folk controlled, no matter how small. This dichotomy between rural and urban held tremendous implications for the kind of compositions created by the Calypsonians in their interpretation of Dominica's economic and cultural condition between 1974 and 1978.

### The Rural-Urban Dichotomy

"Spencer" in the song entitled *Shortage* projected the function of **denunciation**, where the artist denounced conditions created nationally and internationally by the dominant economic system. In *Shortage*, he also projected certain key images in the hope of achieving what Matta referred to as "greater coincidence with the struggles of the neglected popular masses and their mobilization" (1988:450). His use of "donkey", "land", "breadfruit", and the "obeahman" represented attempts to locate the contexts within which development took place nationally, a development not unfamiliar to the rural masses. In implying that land in Dominica was unequally distributed he could have disturbed, irritated and provoked the hegemonic forces - the function of **confrontation** - whose alleged political, economic, moral and cultural *unity* was founded on the alienation of the labour force.

He could not grow a breadfruit, at that time considered the poor person's meal. The international community was experiencing an oil crisis which was affecting most Third World countries. He could not use a vehicle. The simplest means of transporting produce in the rural community then, was a donkey. He did not have one either. He was resorting to the obeahman.

The obeahman was a cultural figure who was supposed to help erase all evils inhibiting the progress of the individual who came to him. His fee was simple, and the *seekers* were assured that their life would be improved and by extension, their strength and ability to work and provide for their economic well-being. But could the obeahman solve such an international crisis, a crisis caused not by *obeah* but by the nature of world economics founded on social

science analysis and paradigms of modernization? Whether modern social science practice is superstition or not is the subject of another thesis. What is of interest here is that there was a real crisis. It was a crisis which extended into the 1970s prompting the Calypsonian "Pickey" to go to *Satan*.

Dear Dragon here I come, this is my humble song  
 Oh Satan here I come, to you my soul belong  
 I want money  
 My children belly hungry  
 I want money, my baby belly empty  
 I want money, no food to put in their belly.

"Pickey" did not, like "Spencer" resort to the *obeahman*. Satan and the Dragon were characteristic of his city specificity while the obeahman was characteristic of the rural community. What is indeed virtuous about "Pickey" is that he was prepared to give his *soul* to Satan that he may find the resources to feed his children. If such a view was regarded as secular, it was subsumed in his African (religious) culture.

The African (religious) culture as stated earlier, was deprived of its real objective character from the phase of plantation society to the time period under study. "Spencer", "Pickey" and the vast majority of Dominicans did not *own* the means of production, and if, or when they finally secured parcels of land through leasing, inheritance or the use of hard-earned savings, those parcels were small holdings. It was smallholding agriculture which was to determine how Dominican men and women achieved their material existence and battled with nature in order to assure and to ensure not only their survival, but their reproduction.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> In Marxian terms, reproduction would be the ways in which the conditions for keeping the circuit sustained are moving (Hall 1986:36). The system of *koudmen* - lending a hand on the land - was well established among the people.

They also developed the idea of *subs* where women made weekly contributions to a cash fund and each had the opportunity to receive the bulk at various intervals, sometimes monthly. The mere treatment of the land indicated a respect for the ecosystem in the ways in which leaves and branches were utilized as fertilizers. The family was often looked over by an older woman who was the mother of all the children in the neighbourhood. Writing of traditional societies, Jayaweera said that community ties were strong, and the people drew strength from a sense of tradition celebrated in myth, ritual and religion. They were "backward-looking, non-acquisitive and non-individualistic" (1987:39).

Jayaweera cited a fundamental difference between large-scale surplus agriculture and traditional smallholding subsistence agriculture, describing the former as a concomitant of urban and industrial cultures, while the latter characterized village (rural) culture (1987:39). Invariably, the consumption patterns in those two cultures would be different. Rastafarian/Dread "Chubby", consistent with his group's ideological condemnation of pre-packaged consumer goods, identified the shift in consumer patterns in the city and called for a return of the *Milk and Honey*. According to Rabess (1989a), "Chubby" was addressing "fading cultural traditions in diet and culinary practices, calling on people to 'bring back the milk and honey (i.e., go back to the natural, local foods, 'ital' foods, as opposed to foreign junk food)". The use of foreign, junk food was not a common practice within the Dread camp, neither was it common in the rural agricultural communities. In the city where it existed primarily, the practice was of much concern to the 1974-78 government. "Comrade Speaker," exhorted Finance Minister V.J. Riviere,

Dominica has an enviable reputation in the Caribbean for its agricultural potential; and yet it was necessary to finance a staggering \$14 million food import bill in 1975. I do not for one moment suggest that all food imports can be dispensed with. Some certainly cannot be excluded, but ... the trend must be halted and indeed put into reverse if our scarce financial resources are to make a meaningful contribution to the economic development of our country (*Hansard*. 1976. July 20, p. 11).

How was that trend to be halted when food was accounting for 31% of total imports and various manufactured goods including clothing and footwear were accounting for \$10 million,<sup>3</sup> pharmaceuticals excluded? (Ibid. p. 11) With a Total Recurrent Expenditure of EC\$23.6

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<sup>3</sup> The following represents a break down of the Total Recurrent Expenditure for the Year 1976-77.

Total General Services	7,539,450
Total Social and Community Services	9,946,450
Total Economic Services	3,901,960
Public Debt	2,201,910
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TOTAL	23,590,050

Source: *Hansard of Parliamentary Debates*, Dominica. 1976. July 20, p. 8.

million one understands the finance minister's distress. "Chubby" in his call for a return to the "ital"<sup>4</sup> foods, listed items which could be grown. In 1975 he sang,

Oh Lord, Oh Lord, look upon my people  
Now we are going out of our culture  
The oppressors have changed our scene  
We need to build back ourselves, Oh Lord, Oh Lord

#### CHORUS

Bring back de milk and honey  
Cane-juice and bush medicine  
Bring back de milk and honey  
Vanilla and cassava  
Bring back de milk and honey  
Coconut-oil and castor  
Bring back de milk and honey

A number of the *obeahmen* were adept in the use of bush medicine, and cane-juice was known in the Kwéyòl communities to strengthen the body which Rastafari/Dread believed was necessary for enhancing a *positive meditation*. In 1936 vanilla was fetching as much as US\$12 per pound on the United States market and was the main source of income for the peasant farmer. Falsification of vanilla pods by farmers and a major fire destroyed the vanilla trade.<sup>5</sup> "Chubby" knew that vanilla was a source of revenue for the small-holding farmers in and around his community.

Coconut oil was regarded as the appropriate medication for healing colds and coughs, and castor oil was an assured purgative in a community where children walked without shoes amidst livestock such as pigs. "Chubby's" call to consume what was produced locally served to intensify what was already being practised rurally. At the same time, he was addressing in English the changing consumer patterns in the city, patterns which were already creeping into the countryside and disturbing the finance minister. Calypsonian "Robin", like Musician

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<sup>4</sup> The Rastafarian name for fruits, vegetables etc., and all that was naturally produced.

<sup>5</sup> In 1942, vanilla was fetching close to \$US12 per pound on the United States market. A Vanilla Growers Association was formed in 1941. This association was headed by an American. Vanilla boomed and reached an all-time high in 1945, until a town fire destroyed 50,000 Lbs. of the cured product (Honeychurch 1984:150).



"Chubby" was to suggest ways of alleviating "the economic inertia" (Riviere 1976:11) afflicting Dominica's national life. The solution was to be found in agriculture. "Robin", an agricultural extension officer, understood the role of agriculture in national development.

Let's talk independently, and check our economy  
 I say agriculture, our main industry here  
 If we can produce sufficiently  
 And provide our neighbouring countries  
 And continue our go-local drive  
 We might survive.

Whatever Dominica produced toward an inter-island trade was agricultural. Dominica's hucksters could attest to that. The go-local drive that "Robin" mentioned was always in practice within the rural communities, and this he might have experienced daily on his trips to those communities. Residents of the city needed to know that indigenous methods of survival were alive in Dominica and should be adopted. "Robin" became one of the few Calypsonians to transcend his own situation and deal with a national concern.

The Calypsonians as the leading voice of *all* the people did not consider that the future material existence of those they represented was based on agriculture. They condemned the brutalization of the Dreads but did not grasp the Dread's love of the land. Put another way, the differences between town and country were also manifested in the very images used in compositions by Calypsonians. For example "Ugly" sang of the plight of the unemployed, where a high-school graduate tells his mother how he feels about the school and employment system.

All dem boys with their A and B  
 Sit down seeing misery  
 I ain' goin' to school Mammy, not me.

It may not be fair to compare the wit of "Ugly" with the historical base of Kadans musician Gordon Henderson. But Henderson reveals the concern of rural parents in the 1970s. In regard to education Henderson sang,

On wac on pedd on famille  
 Bouzwen instruksyon pour reussir  
 Hey, pa layssé  
 Si ou layssé, ou ké wégwété.

A race that has lost its family  
 Needs education to succeed  
 Hey don't give up  
 If you give up you will regret.

The song was appropriately entitled *Rester a L'école* (Remain in School). The students might not have liked the colonial ideology which guided the education system. Also, they might have drifted toward the anti-establishment ideology of the intellectuals and activists. But the Kadans Musician cautioned them to be committed to the race, the Black race in their individual pursuits.

Even if the student wanted to become a tradesperson, the Calypsonian "Zeye" did not provide a frame of reference from which the student could draw interest. For that matter he did not care to suggest agriculture or cooperative development in his lines.

A plumber, a carpenter, mechanic, electrician  
 Don't worry, just call me  
 I am the mobile odd job man  
 A hammer, a hacksaw, a toolkit, a big key ring  
 A hatchet, a crowbar, a spanner, a *donkey t'ing*  
 Man when I start to work and I show you de donkey t'ing  
 Well you sure to hire me  
 You mout' bong to water  
 An' you go beg to try me (emphasis mine).

It is interesting to recall the role that the "donkey" played in "Spencer's" *Shortage*. "Zeye" did not share that perspective of labour and economic initiative. "Solo" who was accredited with writing crown-winning songs in the 1970s, rooted his compositions in a purely city perspective despite the over-riding concern over starvation, hunger and unemployment. In 1976 he resorted to launching the battle over *conditions* within the Calypso camp.

Doe min' what they try  
 If they come I'll beat them  
 With action and style I can always beat them  
 Doe min' if they use ol' tricks  
 76 is plenty licks  
 Anytime they come my way, I'll ill-treat them.

"Mico" was probably the only Calypsonian to launch an attack on "Solo". As far as "Mico" was concerned his rural message was pertinent to the conditions existing in Dominica at the time. He asked the city judges, "Why you disqualify a man with a message and a solution/Is a Babylon policy, that shouldn't be!" (*I Belong To Jehovah*, 1977). In the audience one young man shouted that the song was nonsense. A woman's voice was heard to answer, "because he have 'Solo' in it". Like "Solo", "Ency" was to win the crown on a number of occasions. His compositions were very popular within the ranks of the counter-hegemonic forces. In fact, Denis Joseph contends that "Ency" wrote very good songs. The following was astutely political.

Lord tell me  
 How much longer do we have to suffer  
 Before we can find a solution  
 To release the pressure  
 Oh my people let us unite  
 Together we must stand up and fight  
 Yeah dat's the only way to solve our problem today  
 This is what I say  
 Dis government wicked  
 Dey ain' doin' one damn  
 Just squandering our money  
 Ripping off the land.

"Ency's" call on the people to stand up and fight was quite unlike "Robin's" call for the collective struggle to be directed toward alleviating the economic pressure. It is being submitted that the urban Calypsonians were adept critics of the political formation but found it difficult to transcend their own *structures* in a commitment to the economic struggle of the oppressed, and present ways of providing for the hungry. This observation is in no way designed to nullify their invaluable contribution to interpreting the discriminating behaviour of a class formation in the Dominican society, nor the corruption and economic mismanagement of the 1974-78 government.

It is also being submitted that that class formation was founded on economic advantage and the method of criticism adopted by the Calypsonians in dealing with those vested interests depicted the truly urban character of the Calypso. In fact the available literature shows that

Calypso was reconstructed<sup>6</sup> within an urban context.

Manning states that Calypso was created in Trinidad's Black urban underclass (1990a:415), while Juneja contends that "the wry, witty commentary characteristic of the modern Calypso is typically urban ... nevertheless the Calypso remains both popular and plebeian" (1989:37). It will be recalled, however, that Calypso was grafted onto a vibrant Dominican folk culture, the latter having been created in the crucible of plantation society.

The distinction made by Juneja would not have held as a generalization had the urban-based Calypsonians united the folk song and the Calypso. But Dominican Calypsonians were not intrinsically historical in their compositions, with the exception say of "Mico", who was not the product of a city environment/socialization. Neither was "Shakey". It is interesting to note that neither "Mico", "Shakey" nor "Spencer" lacked the wit and savvy of the city-based Calypsonians. They were also nurtured in an environment which defined its material existence through smallholding subsistence agriculture. In order to interpret that mode of material existence, Calypsonians needed to break out of their preferred mode of perception in the city and relate to a different set of representations which included forks, cutlasses, pickaxes, mud, dirty clothing, a non-individualistic, non-acquisitive environment and a strong sense of independence. In the section which follows, the government's economic agenda will be placed in perspective in the hope of identifying the forces at work in the society which threw the Calypsonians into questioning and resistance.

### Lyrics Beneath the Surface

Except for "Robin" the urban-based Calypsonians took to distancing themselves from the rural directed economic programs of the 1974-78 government. The question is, were they

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<sup>6</sup> The word *reconstructed* is being used here to highlight the points made earlier that the Calypso has African roots and was carried within the individual/community across the Middle Passage in slave ships.

opposed to the agricultural economic initiatives of the administration or did they have another plan? There are three possible answers.

It is possible that they resisted the system by presenting compositions which were *homeless*, lacking any relation with objective or *rational* thinking. This is an area for future research. A theoretical point of departure for future research in that regard will be presented at the beginning of chapter Four. Secondly, they might have been opposed to the programs because their interests were subsumed in the general environment of political resistance. Thirdly, in addition to their opposition, the better Calypsonians were committed to cleaning up the surfacing of class separation in the Dominican society.

That class separation was based on economic inequality. The Calypsonian "Robin" was such a figure. He sought to draw the popular attention to the agricultural development initiatives being adopted by the government. He cited England as the exploiter, a view that would certainly irritate those who were seeking to maintain that relationship while they fought for political and economic hegemony.

If England exploited us, to go on our own we must  
But we must be capable, have responsible people  
We have to run our own economy  
Both internal and externally

Though this was "Robin's" vision for the functioning of an independent nation, it was consistent with the efforts being made by the government to formulate its development programs from within the country. But we should observe a warning clause in "Robin's" second line. How *accountable* was the government? Would Dominica's economy continue to be a function of colonialism and an external economic agenda? The government sought to internalize its activities by introducing a Land Tax<sup>7</sup> which in fact raised the ire of the

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<sup>7</sup> Finance Minister V.J. Riviere in his budget address said, "it was not difficult to find justification for this course of action. In the first place, this source of capital wealth and income, if it is at present taxed at all in Dominica, is very lightly taxed; by far the greater proportion of land is entirely untaxed. Secondly, the owners of land and real property are foremost amongst actual or potential beneficiaries from the inflationary situation, which is at the root of our fiscal difficulties. Thirdly, there is an imperative need to maximize the use of

opposition mulatto classes and their subaltern groups in civil society. On August 13, 1975, the date of the finance minister's budget address, he introduced a rental fee, increased fees regarding licenses,<sup>8</sup> taxes on the production of radio and television commercials for export,<sup>9</sup> on hotel occupancy,<sup>10</sup> and on the use of private wards at the Princess Margaret Hospital.<sup>11</sup> He proposed to give relief "in some measure to all taxpayers whose chargeable incomes, after deductions, do not exceed EC\$2,500" (Ibid. p. 33). Those whose incomes exceeded EC\$2,500 per annum would not receive relief.

At this point it is necessary to cite two stages of class organization which Antonio Gramsci identified in the process of hegemony. They are of relevance in contextualizing the above. Gramsci spoke of the economic corporate stage and the class corporate stage of class organizations. The two stages will be translated to the Dominican situation in the hope of identifying how those class formations responded to the land and tax measures and the general

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land for the economic and social benefit of the people of Dominica. *Ownership of land as a symbol of stored wealth and potential capital gain is incompatible with the pressing and social needs of our society*" (1975:26 emphasis mine).

Writing in the 1970s Riviere noted, "there is a small group of planters who live in comparative affluence on the basis of cultivation especially of bananas, coconuts, grapefruits and oranges; pastoral farming on a large-scale basis is exceptional. Numbering about one hundred, their holdings are well irrigated, mainly low and range in size from 100 to 1,500 acres. Although they comprise only 1 per cent of the population, they are in possession of 41,000 acres (1960 Census), about 54 per cent of alienated arable lands" (1981b: 269).

<sup>8</sup> He did not increase club liquor licences, but did for taverns and hotels. He increased the maximum permitted stockholding for a Parlour Licence from \$400 to \$1,000 to compensate for the effects of inflation. Chemists, pharmacists, quantity surveyors, shipping agents, contractors and guest house keepers were brought into the provision for professional licences. Professional licences were increased by 80% (*Hansard of Parliamentary Debates, Dominica*. 1975. August 13, p. 30).

<sup>9</sup> A transmission fee of \$20 was levied on every advertisement transmitted out of Dominica for broadcast.

<sup>10</sup> This increased from five cents of the account on the room rate of all hotel guests to ten cents.

<sup>11</sup> Here was the greatest problem, as the private wards were used primarily by the so-called *bourgeoisie*. This fee was increased from \$20 a day to \$50 a day. Special lower rates were prescribed for children of 16 years of age and under and for young persons between 16 and 21.

economic environment between 1974 and 1978.

At the economic corporate stage of development, professional or occupational groups recognized their basic common interests in the struggle. What distinguishes them from other groups is that they are conscious of no wider class solidarities or outlooks (1971:181). This posture was characteristic of the merchants that "Spider" sang of.

Merchan's increase prices on all their goods  
 So the unemployed cannot buy no food  
 Who have well have, who ain' have go starve  
 No poor man must stay in his hunger  
 Without flour, rice and sugar.

That was 1977, four years after "Spencer" had sung *Shortage* and the same year that "Pickey" had decided to go to Satan and the Dragon. Gramsci's point of "no wider class solidarities" can be identified in "Spider's" line, "who have well have". Those who had, did not care too much about those who did not have.

Gramsci's class corporate stage reveals the possibilities for common action against the forces of mal-administration and national and international economic exploitation. At the class corporate stage of class consolidation and organization, class solidarity of interests develop but only in the economic field. At this stage it should be observed that each group, those who own smallholdings and those whose interests are in large-scale agriculture, manufacturing and industrialization, can adopt their own levels of organization. Alan Hunt (1990:309) contends that this second stage widens the scope of consciousness to focus on the common interests of the class, requiring deliberate strategies to overcome sectional interests. In the words of Stuart Hall, this was the terrain more favourable to the "dissemination of certain modes of thought and certain ways of posing and resolving questions involving the entire subsequent development of national life" (1986a:11). The original question was how would those interests respond to those tax measures and government's continual unwillingness to account for the nation's finances. To use Hunt's observation, what would these *deliberate* strategies of resistance be?

Economic resistance was adopted by the trade unions in a hope of drawing all the

popular forces into a struggle against mal-administration. Political resistance, drawn from the ideological framework of the opposition party would finally result in a rebellion in concert with the trade unions and professional and occupational groups. Cultural resistance was adopted by the Calypsonians, invariably drawn into the political and economic struggle.

What is of interest is that political activity required a different level of resistance in parliament and the city than it did in the rural community halls. The city agitators had their objectives, among those being the installation into power of the economic corporate interests who invariably would go on to industrialize. Rural peoples were not into industry and, therefore, their interests would not be a *priority* on the economic agenda. Conscious of their high levels of independent-mindedness and resilience, they were likely to survive despite the poor levels of organization within their ranks. As a group they could be considered outside of colonial hegemony because their contribution to political, economic, intellectual and moral unity would not find a voice with specific reference to their mode of survival which was in agriculture. In recalling Alan Hunt's observation on the corporate stage of class organization, we are also forced to juxtapose his view with that of Stuart Hall who contended that it is around the *disorganization* and *fragmentation* of the sum total of popular thought that the struggle rages. In the absence of the popular/rural thought, hegemony would not be attained. "Spider", though city-based, sought to capture that totality of national feeling and present it to the leaders, partially fulfilling his role as a cultural figure and agent in establishing the relation "between commonsense and the upper levels of philosophy" (Gramsci 1971:331). He sang,

Tragedy and tribulation  
Is binding on the whole population  
What a critical situation, oh what a condition  
Lord hear our prayers, help us wipe away all tears  
Please set us free, towards great prosperity

As far as "Spider" was concerned the people felt enslaved. But a unity, a tinge of hope - a convocation to meet - was evident in his song. He wanted the people to be set free both



from the external control systems and the internal mechanisms of repression. He wanted a new Caribbean person.

"Liberator", a city-based Calypsonian denounced the conditions created nationally. But unlike "Robin", he did not suggest a context of external control and manipulation. The problem was internal. He sang,

Now-a-days we can't have children  
Because malnutrition is killing  
We rather build up a regiment  
Almost every cent for reinforcement  
Meantime in de hospital  
Dey run short of chemical  
No bandage to tie  
No oxygen to save human life  
It' a shame!

"Spider's" call on the Lord and "Liberator's" denunciation of health conditions were complemented by works of resistance among the trade unions<sup>12</sup> and commercial and financial interests. They too found it necessary to *pose their own action*.

But Hall warns us about the composition of the system of alliances which take up position against what he calls, the historic bloc. That "system of alliances" or opposition force "has its roots in the fundamental class division of society" making the actual form of the political struggle adopt a "*wider social character ... dividing ... all the popular classes on one side, and those representing the interest of capital and the power bloc grouped around the state on the other*" (Hall 1986a:16 emphasis mine). What was evident in Dominica was not only the grouping of capital interests around the state, but the grouping of capital interests around the trade unions, occupational groups and the opposition party.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Nurses and teachers formed the core of the Civil Service Association.

<sup>13</sup> The trade union which posed the most serious threat to the John Administration was the Civil Service Association (CSA). In 1977 the CSA was to lead a massive strike which lasted 47 days.

According to Clement Jolly in his edition *A Time To Remember*, "Not only was the day-to-day work of government brought to a standstill, but nurses, prison guards, workers at the (Mental) St. Luke's Hospital and the employees of the Central Water Authority, teachers and airport workers were all on strike. Besides, the Waterfront and Allied Workers Union

Within those groups there were *differences rooted in colonial hegemony* which the Calypsonians also sought to uncover. And they did it best within the context of Carnival, the people's festival. Carnival was the time of revolt against the language, norms and values of not only the existing system, but sometimes one's own class values. For example in "Spider's" *Mass Without Class* (1977), he must have touched Sylvia in the Carnival band and she was not pleased. He warned her, however, that

If you come in de ban',  
 Sylvia ah bong<sup>14</sup> to touch you han'  
 There's no creed or class 'specially when we playing mas  
 Don't bring no highy-tighty<sup>15</sup> ways inside de ban'  
 Leave all highy-tighty ways for you an' you man  
 You feel you ain' black, you better stay back  
 We ain' know no class when we playing mas.

Such separation by Sylvia would be based on her economic interests, her skin colour ("Spider" draws on the Black Power ideology and later, the Dread coinage *leggobeast*), the location of her residential area, the very language of her body and clothing.<sup>16</sup> The behavior of separating

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decided that its port workers would not handle any goods imported into the country" (1984:193).

Says Honeychurch, "for almost seven weeks the entire Caribbean looked on, amazed that it was possible for a country to do such a thing" (1984:193). The strike might have abated if not for John claiming that there were enough jails in the country to hold the 2,000 civil servants striking for EC\$4.01 million in retroactive pay due to them over three years.

<sup>14</sup> "Bong to" means must, i.e., it is inevitable.

<sup>15</sup> "Highy-tighty" is composed of two words, "high" and "tight". "High" would refer to Sylvia's *class*, and "tight" would refer to her comportment/absence of relaxation/tenseness in the presence of those who did not belong to her class.

<sup>16</sup> Grant McCracken contends that clothing is often a means whereby cultural categories and principles are encoded and made manifest. "... It is also a valuable means of communication for ritual in general, and rites of passage in particular ... Clothing can also be used to mark and even to effect the transition from one cultural category to another that occurs in the rite of passage" (1988:60). Clothing can represent a cultural choice, a choice determined by class preferences.

"Spider" in his first verse stated clearly that Sylvia came out to play mas, but with people of her class. In the second verse she was *too beautiful to get a groove*, and in the third

She threatened to call de police  
 When ah call she a damn *leggobeast*  
 She tell me *you ain' got no money*

herself from a particular set of persons was indicative of a particular set of values which she had internalized, values which were not consistent with the African (religious) cultural ethos of celebration and *possession*. It was not *proper* for those trained by and selected from the ranks of colonial institutions to *lose control* even among their own kind. That the family as a major agent of socialization (Haralambos and Heald 1980:340), an ideological state apparatus (Althusser 1971:17) and a trench of hegemony (Gramsci 1971:238-239) could propagate that notion is not without foundation. Haralambos and Heald identified the monogamous family as having developed with the emergence of private property (1980:340) while Marx and Engels speak of the ensuing "natural division of labour in the family and the separation of society into individual families opposed to one another" (1972:52). As was stated in chapter One, economic and social advantage in colonial society was a function of property, colour and language. It was Henderson (1988) who drew our attention to the education function, where those who were poor and spoke Kwéyòl had no opportunities to be educated. Property, colour and language were functions of a particular hierarchy which forbade entry to those who did not share those characteristics. The hierarchy functioning within colonial society was reflected in the family structure. In monogamous families characteristic of the upper-class, wives and children were subjected to the father, a staunch figure in maintaining colonial hegemony in a society where the extended family was abhorred. Calypsonian "Robin" was sufficiently witty to equate the disintegrating society with the decreased potency of the husband. He used the double entendres of sexual potency.

My husban' ain' joking, he hard  
 My husban' ain' playing, he hard  
 But when it come to night-time  
 And it time for hard time  
 When time to be hard he ain' hard.

This song did not serve to *inform* as much as to *entertain*. Here was the other side of the

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I ain' need your damn company  
 Ah say wait Sylvia wait  
 You'll be lucky and happy to fin' a sweet man like me (emphasis mine).

African (religious) culture which carried the seeds of rebellion against the *morality* of colonial hegemony. As will be seen later when I cite a composition of the founder of Kadans Gordon Henderson, Kadans also carried that seed of rebellion even while it entertained. The discussion, therefore, takes us back to the original features of the African (religious) culture. The very dance accompanying the music which entertained was a rebellion against the suave of colonial society. Like the Bélé, dances to Kadans, Zouk and Calypso were consummated in the most heated place!

"Robin" had that ability to produce songs which questioned the dominant system and at the same time served to entertain the masses. In many instances the former would be directed against the 1974-78 government and the latter would serve to ridicule the remnants of behaviour left over by colonial hegemony. As a young person, he was particularly concerned about the disarticulation between the education system and the economic system. The former continued to serve the interest of the few reflecting "the relations of production" (Haralambos 1980:180) of the remains of colonial hegemony. If the education system was designed to reproduce the labour force, its churning out of 2,000 students a year who would remain unemployed for another year depicted a state machinery that was proving to be a major liability. "Robin" called for a change.

That *want a change* was not political, it was for the youth. The politicians take it politically because they hear *we want a change*. It was a song appealing for a change in the system to facilitate the youth. So I said pass *a Bill for more employment*, in other words, try to create avenues. Every year they can say in their budget they have certain things coming up meet the kind of demand for more employment in the country at this time (Interview. September 1990).

"Robin" would agree that a call for a change in the system to facilitate the youth was a political statement. It was political in light of the administration's economic objectives to implement cooperative and self-help programs, and develop a national service patterned on the Marxist-Leninist philosophy which they had borrowed not from its source, but from Guyana. To be critical of the economics of education was to be critical of the government's political ideology. His appeal to the youth in an environment where that youth was the subject of much

controversy in the family, the schools and sub-culture was well crafted, but not well received by the politicians who were investing just over EC\$6 million in education.<sup>17</sup> There were three important phases in "Robin's" *We Want A Change*. The first phase called for a Bill for more *employment*.

Instead you say we revolutionary  
An' dey passing Bill to kill we  
Mr. Premier next time you in parliament  
Pass a Bill for more employment.

The Calypsonian was demanding that the government show its sense of responsibility. The second phase called for *action real Socialist praxis*.

Too much talking without action  
Cannot forward a nation  
Dey talking 'bout Socialism  
But they still practising Capitalism.

The third phase complemented the efforts toward *change*.

Dey want us to go into self-employment  
An' even cooperative development  
So brothers doe fin' me strange  
But dat's just the beginning of de change.

Employment, action, real Socialist praxis and change represented the stages through which "Robin" hoped the government's development programs would take. His final line in the third phase is significant. Here he reveals the general opposition which he *knew* his audience felt toward any attempts by the John administration to foster economic activity. He believed in self-employment and cooperative development. Those were features of existence which the rural peoples had adopted from the days of emancipation to the 1970s. His *economic theory* was not devoid of a cultural focus. His penultimate line "brothers don't get me wrong" also revealed his knowledge of the divisions which existed in the society over the economic

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<sup>17</sup> Education at Dominica's 57 primary schools was free. At the Secondary level, school fees were EC\$8 per term in the lower forms and EC\$10 per term in the higher forms. At the Sixth Form College where students were preparing for the Advanced Level Examinations, school fees were EC\$10. The fact that Education had received the *largest slice* of the *national cake* disturbed Robin, because there appeared to be a disarticulation between that budgetary allocation and employment. Education received EC\$6,036,890 out of a EC\$21.3 million.

activities of the John administration. Moreover, he demonstrated that the struggle for economic development in Dominica at that time was being waged primarily at the level of the superstructure. It was a battle of ideas over which path should be taken and methods adopted to achieve economic prosperity.

The economic corporate interests had their objectives, and in concert with the opposition party and the trade unions were seeking to nullify the articulation between education and employment. Moreover to be employed one had to belong to the class and share the values and aspirations of those economic corporate interests. "Pickey" identified that tendency and more. In 1978, he sang,

Employment is for high-ranking family  
 But to get in power they sing too much bourgeoisie  
 Presently a housing scheme is going on  
 But there is none to compare those built by F.A. Baron  
 Government creating new ministries  
 While civil servants suffering to get their salaries  
 The armed forces lodging well equipped  
 And on the school-floor our children they have to sit.

They promise better sanitation  
 Good food and free education  
 They always preaching love, peace and unity  
 But is more corruption and misery.

"Pickey" captured too many contradictions in this song: employment and bourgeois sentiments, a housing scheme and Frank Baron, government expansion and civil servants in disarray, the satisfaction of the armed-forces and the systematic deprivation of Dominica's primary school children. Those are antagonistic contradictions. "Antagonistic contradictions are those between hostile social forces ... their resolution ... involves an intensification and deepening of contradictions" (Konstantinov 1979:114). Their resolution required a civil uprising!

The fact that the government maintained a well-stocked armoury while schools were deprived of basic facilities is a direct indication of its concentration on repression rather than education. This was a blatant contradiction of its Socialist creed. It created new ministries while it continued to owe the employees of its existing departments. And despite its aversion

toward the bourgeoisie, employment was for 'high-ranking' families. As for Frank Baron, he was once Dominica's Chief Minister and at present a key figure in the proliferation of interlocking directorates taking place in Dominica today. His housing scheme was certainly superior to the governments'. What "Pickey" did not tell us is that the persons placed in key institutions of power from the days of colonial rule were creations of colonial ideological hegemony. They facilitated the employment of their class, thereby protecting their interests and the reproduction of the system.

Forces within the system were antagonistic to it. The system itself exhibited marked contradictions. On one hand it was seeking to maximize the use of agricultural lands, and on the other, laws existed which protected the property of large land-owners. An example was An Ordinance For Protection Of Praedial Larceny 1951, amended to the Praedial Larceny (Amendment) Dominica Act No. 4 of 1978. According to Section 4 of the Act,

Whoever steals, or destroys or damages with intent to steal, any cultivated plant, root, fruit or vegetable production, used for the food of man or beast, or for medicine or for distilling or for dyeing, or in any course of any manufacture, and growing on any land, open or enclosed, not being a garden orchard, pleasure-ground or nursery-ground, shall be guilty of an offence.

The *thief* when brought before a Court of Summary Conviction and charged was sentenced to one year imprisonment. That was the colonial effort to protect its economic benefits. However, the people who lived in the communities adjoining large estates did not consider the law so stringent that it prohibited a resident and even a worker on that estate from taking a coconut. The people were accustomed to a process of sharing and reciprocity developed through their cooperative activities and koudmen. But the ideas which pervaded the legal system were constructed to debar the labour force from the slightest economic benefit, if we can call the retrieval of a coconut from an estate measuring more than 1,000 acres an economic benefit!

"Chubby" of the "Midnight Groovers", on the way to his garden, stopped at the Geneva Estate to pick up a dried coconut. The guard on the Estate came upon him and a struggle

ensued for the nut. The guard took the nut to the Grandbay Police Station. "Chubby" was arrested and taken before the Grandbay Magistrate. His mother fainted when he was sentenced to one year imprisonment.

While in prison he played his guitar and sang in memory of the guard, "sa mwe douvan sa'w dèyè" ("mine is in front, yours is to come"). Unfortunately for his soul, "Chubby" was not in prison for more than two weeks. On his release he travelled to St. Martin and recorded *Pou yon Koko* (For a Coconut), singing "sa'ou té vlé pou mwe missya, sa mwe douvan sa'w dèyè" ("whatsoever you wanted for me sir, mine is in front, yours is to come"). Well, as fate would have it, the same guard who arrested "Chubby" got into a fight with another man. In that struggle the man fell to the ground pretending to be dead. The guard who arrested "Chubby" was so scared that he had killed the man, that he went to his house and drank a weedicide, dying in the process! This was a story told to the author in September 1990, authenticated by Marcel Fontaine of the Kwéyòl Committee and quoted by Rabess in his analysis of Kadans music in the 1970s. In the following, "Chubby" recalls the exchange with the magistrate. Observe that he roots his sense of justice in the Rastafari/Dread ideology.

Chubby: They sentence me a year prison for fifteen cents, because the coconut cost fifteen cents. But as man know the eyes of the Lord always on the righteous. So I know I wouldn't stay in prison.

Interviewer: What de magistrate tell you?

Chubby: (laughter) Well what he show me, if I know it not right to take a t'ing that not belongs to me. I say well is a fiel' of coconut dat have a million trees of coconut and even though a man take a coconut and he didn't ask for it, that is not a problem. He say, well no. The law say if you took a cane that not belongs to you or a lime or a coconut or anything you suppose to go to prison (Interview. September 1990).

One of Dominica's leading artists was sentenced to prison for taking a dried coconut from the Geneva Estate belonging to large land-owner Elias Nassief. The guard of that Estate did not understand rural community sentiments and paid for it! For the cultural collectivity of "Chubby's" village, the death of "Chubby's" and by extension the community's aggressor,



symbolized the victory of good over evil, Rasta over Babylon, propertyless over proprietor.

The very law was located within a rural context where the majority poor and propertyless provided labour alienated from the product. The mode of production was exploitative and the relations of production discriminating. In response to that general economic mal-function, the Calypsonians took to *undressing* the superstructure, challenging the ideas inherent in the family systems, the education system, the commercial block and the parliament. From out of their urban wit they were able to question the economic ideology on which colonial hegemony had survived.

In seeking participatory democracy, the clarification of the values and aspirations of the society, the satisfaction of basic needs, an emphasis on self-reliance and importantly, structural changes in social relations and economic activity, except for "Robin", the Calypsonians did not care to examine the agricultural initiatives of the 1974-78 government.

### Summary and Conclusion

Marx and Engels in *The German Ideology* contended that consciousness is from the very beginning a social product and remains so for as long as people exist. They also add that "man's (sic) consciousness of the necessity of associating with the individuals around him (sic) is the beginning of the consciousness that he (sic) is living in society" (1972:51). What are the implications of the above observation with specific reference to the rural-urban dichotomy discussed in this chapter?

Despite the fact that it was agriculture which would determine the economic and cultural development of the nation, the political and social interests at the centre were divorced from that reality in the periphery. Just as the consumption patterns grew to be different between the rural and urban, the bulk of urban Calypsos did not relate to the material existence of rural peoples who were in the majority. Moreover, the Calypsos seldom adopted the Kwéyòl element in commenting on the economic, the very base from which the folk culture of the population had developed.

But one should not nullify the efforts of the Calypsonians at the urban level. As products of a society which drew deep lines of distinction between the rural and the urban, their consciousness would remain subject to the laws of that particular environment and its political and class divisions. It is to their credit that they succeeded in uncovering the class formations in the city. Their compositions opened gaps in the dominant economic and political discourse, and in concert with the counter-hegemonic forces served as catalysts for a popular uprising.

More succinctly though, the Calypsonians were the product of another, more general *environment*. It was an environment which had been nurtured on a history of self-criticism. In times when the real social and economic contradictions were too confusing to be unravelled, Calypsonians fell back on that tradition of laughing at self, trivializing the objective and plumbing a subjectivity nurtured in the process of social communication. Had it been a more frequent practice, this process of self-reflexivity would have united with the historical ideas of the Kadans musicians and drifted away from the *current* nature of *information* which the Calypso epitomizes and urban life encourages. The Calypsonians would have united with the people in the interpretation of their real material existence, offering them the opportunity for greater organization for liberation. Rooted in the city and being part of the mobilization taking place against the John administration, urbanites demonstrated a clearer level of organization. But the truth is rural people had another weapon and another medium. That weapon was Kwéyòl and the medium was Kadans.

Chapter Four, Communication and Culture, intends to show what happened when the language of the people, rural people particularly, was adopted by Musicians in their composition. The all-English radio which from its inception in 1970 had struggled to maintain the semblance of British colonialism in language, values and outlooks, had to contend with a language which had been despised by the colonial masters and the Dominican elite. Having served as the bastion of all that was English in the city and thus representative of ruling class

ideas, radio needed to be demystified. When the ideas expressed in both English and Kwéyòl lyrics challenged the hegemonic forces, censors emerged to guard their interests.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE

Musik la lèvé on lo puissance  
(The music brought up/revealed/threw up great force)  
(Grammacks, *Mi Dayba*, 1975)

In Chapter Three the Calypsonians' contribution to Dominica's economic and cultural development was judged on the basis of whether their compositions related in any way to enhancing agriculture. That methodological restriction was casted within the context of the town-country dichotomy. It drew out the class divisions in the city but did no justice to the multi-dimensional nature of development.

Dominica was fortunate to have had artists who dared to relate economic need with popular song. According to *Fame*, a magazine published by the Dominica Foundation for Artists, Musicians and Entertainers, they served as the nations's jesters,

those who said for us the things we were thinking but lacked the *platform* for expressing. They have been our educators, our chastisers, our rumour and scandal mongers, but above all, they have been our entertainers. There were those who gave us the feeling that we were sharing an experience of extraordinary proportions (1988:27 emphasis mine).

Whether the contributions made to advancing the popular struggle were songs with lyrics which referred to enhancing agriculture or highlighting appalling social services, they represented an ideological advancement over and above complacency and indifference.

Moreover, what was considered a *non-contribution* to economic development was of special significance to the popular psyche. For example although "Zeye's" "hammer, hacksaw, tool-kit and big key ring" (*Tradesman*, 1976) condescended into a sexual metaphor and lost its economic line, the *irrationality* of the composition gave it its popular appeal at Carnival time. The breaking away from *rational* compositions revealed another aspect of development. It uncovered the willingness of the people through Composers, to laugh at themselves and protect their psychological health in times of crisis. It was an age-old practice developed on plantation

society where maximum exploitation of labour was achieved hand-in-hand with the denigration of human dignity.

A third aspect of development could be identified in the resilience of cultural practices. The cultural practices cited by Rabess (1989b) on French plantation society in 1838, where plantation owners and the ruling class were ridiculed in song and dance, were maintained and communicated from generation to generation. The labour force in using the Kwéyòl language succeeded in protecting the implications of its message. The wry, witty character of the Calypso continued that tradition, but generally and in accordance with the seriousness of the popular struggle in the 1970s, its English messages were direct. Its messages were more direct unlike the period following emancipation, on the grounds that in the 1970s Calypso was not a practice wholly ridiculed by those who held on to the legacy of colonialism in the 1970s.

Nurturing counter-hegemonic sentiments, the elite class slowly came to realize that the Calypso which irritated the colonial aristocracy and subaltern classes in civil society in the 1950s and beyond, could serve as an instrument for their ascent to power. Moreover, the rhythm was infectious. It was, therefore, a popular form of social commentary which appealed to all. Its role as the newspaper of the poor and illiterate had been transformed into the *medium* of the poor and rich, literate and illiterate, leaders and led. The people were, therefore, indirectly involved in contributing to the development discourse. The concept of development is, therefore, broadened to include not only the satisfaction of basic needs, structural changes in social and economic relations and participatory democracy, but includes the accretion of the rights to expression and use of a more meaningful language to communicate those expressions and experiences. Development also involves the ability to build on the solid achievements of the past.

An achievement of the Dominican population was that of critical thinking, nurtured more forcefully in the 1970s when the intellectuals and activists became one of the principal agents in the circulation and development of culture and ideology. They aligned themselves

with the emerging popular forces and elaborated new currents of ideas, ideas launched within the context of real objective contradictions. What is of interest is that the Calypsonians were not always drawn into commenting on the real objective issues of ownership of the means of production, land distribution, the satisfaction of basic needs, and mismanagement of the national treasury. The nature of their compositions often represented what Hauser (1982:33) refers to as "the intertwining of immanence and transcendence ... the paradox of dialectic itself." He contends that the intertwining reveals itself most breathtakingly and fruitfully in art where the creation belongs and does not belong to their creators (Ibid. p. 338).

"Solo", "Spencer", "Mico" and "Robin" at times refused to allow their consciousness to be determined by purely objective issues. In 1976, "Spencer" critiqued the judging of Calypso,<sup>1</sup> "Solo" said "it was licks for 76" for his fellow-Calypsonians, and "Mico" criticized the winning of the Crown by "Solo" saying that his ("Mico") songs served the function of **confrontation** in disturbing the judges and Calypsonians bringing "judgement to their **kinky** conscience". Calypsonians created a tension within the camp itself, and yet were not 'enemies'.<sup>2</sup> "Spencer" was against false consciousness and any attempts by Calypso judges, Carnival organizers and government, to alienate the artist from the art form. And in resisting

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<sup>1</sup> In 1976 "Spencer" sang,

If they want a popularity King  
That would be quite a different t'ing  
Stage a separate competition  
With this I would have no objection  
But doe use we good Calypso in vain  
We want deserving Calypso Kings to reign  
So take it from me we want some improvement in this country.

<sup>2</sup> "The best guys who sang Calypsos ... were the older Calypsonians. The younger fellas today, they come on the beat not because they like Calypso, but because the only avenue now for a little popularity and ways of bringing out their songs ... A lotta guys came in and they didn't come in with the love. They came in to make a quick fame, a local fame and a little cash ... In the older days fellas would say, "Ency you're hoarse man, look I have honey in my bag." Today you go backstage and if those guys could shoot you before you go on, they will shoot you ... it's a kin'a politicking in Calypso" (Norman "Ency" Cyrille. Interview. September 1990).

the containment of their compositions, the Calypso became a force independent of, but not unrelated to the real objective conditions.

The four Calypsonians mentioned above regarded their consciousness as a social product, and demonstrated it clearly in *guarding* the political, economic, intellectual and moral terrain. But, says Hauser, "the urge toward artistic creation itself can lead to the genesis of works of art without the presence of corresponding social needs and demands" (1982:215-216). This is not to suggest that there are no contradictory forces and "no counter-tendencies" (Grossberg 1986c:46). But Hauser's observation points to a significant characteristic of Caribbean artists; their ability to transcend the restrictions of commenting on *objective* economic and political situations.

The argument was more succinctly developed by Aggrey Brown in his analysis of Marx and Engels' conclusion that the "... the class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, ideas of those who lack the means of production are subject to it" (1972:64). The leading political and socio-economic discourse in Dominica in the 1970s may have at times overwhelmed the artists, but they were not restricted by them. According to Brown,

[In] broad sociological terms and the materialist-empiricist tradition, Marx and Engels' insight does provide a useful point of departure for analyzing the dynamics of class conflict especially within culturally homogeneous societies. It also brings into sharp focus the relationship between ideas and concepts and their instrumental manifestations. However, the theory is of little utility when the task is to explain cultural syncretism in socially and racially heterogeneous situations such as the Commonwealth Caribbean (1984b).

In a review of the writings of Arnold Hauser, Louis Harap agreed that Marx and Engels "left only fragmentary hints of their ideas about the application of their approach to art and literature" (1985:87), and expressed delight that fresh approaches to the problem were developing. These approaches are evident in the works of Brown, Ellis, Jansen and Marcuse.

It is what Hauser calls "the *inner struggle* between the different tendencies" (1982:351

emphasis mine) which critics contend Marxism did not consider. Ellis (1980:191) argues that Marxism ignored the process by which social contradictions articulate themselves subjectively, the way in which they produce a reactionary stance. In short, says Ellis, Marxism ignored the contradiction between ideological practice and economic practices. Marxism did not break open the transcendental sense, neither did the economistic model take into account humankind's art, erotic nature, sense of play, or spirit of adventure (Jansen 1988:96), coined *homeless contents* by Herbert Marcuse. Marcuse (1974:180-181) notes that foremost among these homeless contents and values "were those of imagination: free, creative or reproductive intuition of objects which are not directly given".

Those observations by Ellis, Jansen and Marcuse are not new to the Caribbean, where *homeless contents* and values of the imagination were significant means of production to survive the ruins of plantation society (Nettleford 1987). What is more they were *tamed* and developed from their basis in the commonsense practices of the people and through the artists, served to critique the ideological formations of neo-colonialism. The musicians and composers could in the words of John Ellis (1982:192-193) "rediscover their own laws and history and be part of the social reality that instructed it". But neither Ellis, Jansen nor Marcuse would doubt the invaluable point of departure that Marxism provides in the examination of the contradictions between art and society.

The artists might not have articulated a theory in the language of Marx, but were aware<sup>3</sup> that those who owned the means of production and information were the ones to control, manufacture and disseminate the leading ideas and systematically suppress alternative

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<sup>3</sup> Another of the many experiences passed on from generation to generation was the nature of plantation society. This was more formally stated by Professor Rex Nettleford of the University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica. He was addressing media practitioners in Barbados.

Nettleford said, "long before Karl Marx was even conceived, we in the Caribbean addressed the matter of the exploitation of labour and understood the nexus between ownership and class positioning, and more than that, the nexus between race and colour on the one hand, and ownership of the productive forces, including the labour and political power on the other" (1990)



ones. Kadans Musicians were to take up the alternative ideas and express them in a language which had been suppressed throughout colonialism. It was a suppression which was sustained throughout the British established Civil Service and supported by the planter and merchant class,<sup>4</sup> who conceived of English as the accepted and sole medium of communication suitable for use by radio. The medium needed to be demystified. Radio and its technology were equal to English production, and any other language would not serve the purpose of transmitting education and information. Writing on the mass media and the use of Creole languages in the Caribbean, Devonish noted that

the use of English is further reinforced by the fact that radio is a Public-Formal medium, and English is the Public-Formal spoken language of the usually well-educated persons, radio announcers included, who appear most frequently on radio. As a result, formal interviews, discussions of 'serious topics', speeches, etc. broadcast on the radio tend to be English ... Radio like the newspapers often employ Creole for purposes of *realism* and *social authenticity* (1986:92-93 emphasis mine).

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<sup>4</sup> It is difficult to come to terms with the Dominica class structure. Riviere (1981a:269-280) gives the most comprehensive insight. Writing of the 1970s he described the Civil Service as a block of diverse interests. "At the top are a handful of high-ranking officers such as Cabinet Secretary, Establishment Officer and Permanent Secretaries; below are a group comprising Assistant Secretaries and executive officers; at a low level lie the numerical backbone of the service, petty officers and clerks of one stripe or another; at the very base are a fair number of janitors, porters, messengers and other such handymen." The top officers are of interest to this discussion.

Those placed in institutions of power shared the interests and economic objectives of those who owned the means of production. In most cases they owned the means of production and were in institutions of power, being barristers, doctors, politicians and parliamentarians. Riviere makes a startling distinction. "The man who eats turkey with knife and fork and napkin around his neck, dresses lavishly, plays tennis, drinks champagne, has airs, is in possession of vast wealth. Yet it is not a big income in itself that places him in a particular class, but, rather, the source of his income, that is, the manner in which he fits into the process of production. As private owners of the means of distribution of goods and services, he would belong to the merchant class. He is in a different class from private owners of the means of production in land who constitute a land-owning class. But that is not to say they have conflicting interests ... their interest is to maximize profits through exploitation of labour" (1981b:281).

This suggests as in the days of plantation society, the exclusion of the labour force from operating within institutions such as the colonial administrative system, the legal system and various administrative bodies. Says Devonish (1986:43), "only the language of the dominant ... group ... would have been used in the functioning of those institutions." The labour force was the Kwéyòl-speaking majority whose daily mode of material existence was interpreted by Kadans musicians and introduced to the English airwaves.

Bravo! Realism and social authenticity are rooted in Kwéyòl. This chapter will examine how Kwéyòl's entry into radio was facilitated. The discussion will be based on interviews conducted with Denis Joseph and Felix Henderson. Joseph was the manager of the Dominica Broadcasting Corporation from 1974 to 1978. Henderson who joined the station in 1977 is at present head of the Kwéyòl department. The second section of this chapter will examine the ideas expressed in the language. I will draw on the lyrics presented in the previous chapters and trace the reaction of government officials, radio staff, members of the Carnival organizing committee and other national interests to the ideas inherent in the lyrics.

### Radio Breaking Away From Colonial Dependency

The early policies and promises which guided radio development in the colonial countries included the enlistment of loyalty, the promotion of tranquility and unity, the preparation for autonomy, the achievement of modernization and the encouragement of indigenous creativity (Katz & Wedell 1980:7-8). The very definition of the concept of communication was a received one (Brown 1984:6). The media were assumed to create changes in the behavior of individuals exposed to their influence (Hall 1982a:57). In the case of Dominica, English programs had to be created for and transmitted to the people in the hope of changing their attitudes.

But there was another practice of communication always at work in the Dominican society. It was the practice of social communication rooted in Kwéyòl. Social communication, wrote Brown (1984:3), is not the mere *transmission* of information from one source to another. Rather, social communication is an "interactive process involving the reciprocal exchange of meaning between intelligences" (1986:4).<sup>5</sup> When in process, social communication is created

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<sup>5</sup> Brown says that the British colonialists and slave masters understood this well when they banned the beating of drums by the African slaves on their plantations. "... The threat to the British slave-owners was not the beating of drums by the slaves as much as it was exclusion

with the people, not *for* the people. In the words of Denis Joseph, "people always respond if they think you are interested in them. When you look as if you are doing things for them they don't take you on. When you look as if you're doing things with them you get all the response you need".

Indeed, when radio was introduced in the colonies it was expected, according to Stuart Hall, to define reality, "definitions sustained and produced through *certain* linguistic practices by means of which selected definitions of the real were represented" (1982a:64 emphasis mine). And, says Hall, representation is "the active labour of selecting, presenting, of structuring and shaping: not merely the transmitting of an already-existing meaning, but the more active labour of making things mean" (Ibid. p. 64). It was a practice, intent on presenting a set of values, beliefs, rituals and institutional procedures (Ibid. p. 64), consistent with colonial ideological hegemony. Communication was viewed as a process where meanings were given, not as one where meanings were elicited. Those were the practices which the planter and merchant class, doctors, lawyers, cabinet and permanent secretaries supported and which Joseph questioned in 1974 when he took up the role as manager.

When Radio Dominica<sup>6</sup> began in 1970, its mandate was that education and information be transmitted to its audience. The Broadcasting Act of 1975 maintained the same objective, only this time it stated explicitly that programs broadcast from the station must contain a suitable proportion of "matter calculated to appeal especially to the *tastes* and *outlook* of the

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from the meaningful symbolic universe of the slaves. That is, it was not the information-transmitting technology per se that constituted the problem for the overlords, but rather the coded content of the transmitted information. That coded content the slave-owners could not understand. But it was meaningful to the slaves ... the crucial point ... is information that is transmitted must be understood before it can be said that communication has occurred. And understanding is a function of a shared symbolic universe and interaction between intelligences" (1986:4).

<sup>6</sup> In 1975 the name was changed to Dominica Broadcasting Corporation.

persons served by the station" (emphasis mine).<sup>7</sup> Joseph perceived tastes and outlook to be grounded in a Dominican/Caribbean and by extension, African culture. "We are people of the drums, everything has to be brought to us through a drum message" (Interview, September 1990). Joseph's orientation toward broadcasting in Dominica and the Caribbean was founded on a consciousness of the power of the African (religious) culture, his own love for music and, an understanding of the changing cultural environment. Great emphasis was being placed on people's power by the intellectuals and activists, university professors, economists, playwrights, sculptors and educators. Rural people became his target audience.

I came in at a time when ... nobody was listening so to speak, except government ministers. Having begun the process of moving from a dependence totally on outside music - I mean we had a lot of that - but promoting local talent, bringing local programs like the Kwéyòl local programs ... the listenership increased where it was supposed to increase, that is in the country-side (Interview, September 1990).<sup>8</sup>

Precisely! The Minister responsible for Information was not opposed to the venture,<sup>9</sup> partly because there were political opportunities to be won and government's economic programs could receive the propagation required. Says Joseph, "I saw the grand opening for communications in Dominica. Suddenly, I was seeing the ability now to reach the farmer in his language, to talk to him and to have him listening".

But how would that information be carried? Where were the drums which Joseph mentioned as the medium par excellence for taking messages to the Dominican people? They were owners of small-scale agriculture holdings and celebrators of myriad village feasts rooted

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<sup>7</sup> *Dominica Broadcasting Corporation Act, No. 33 of 1975. Section 8. - (1) (e).*

<sup>8</sup> Joseph in an interview with the author said that he asked his news editor to visit the countryside to get a feel of how the Kwéyòl programs were being received. It was not any scientific survey. "To put it mildly he returned with a bus-load of provisions, vegetables, coconuts, you name it".

<sup>9</sup> "It was because of our concern for cultural advancement of our country, that is why we introduced patois on the radio, in our desire to protect our dialect. Because at one time some persons were not in favour of patois. They criticized patois on the radio saying that children will not be able to speak proper English if we allow patois. But today you see, its no longer called patois, for some reasons or another, it's called Kwéyòl" (Patrick John, 1990).

in Kwéyòl. They were people of the Bellaire, Quadrille, Mazouk and Calypso. They were people who held strong links with the French departments of Martinique and Guadeloupe. They were story-tellers with a deep sense of appreciation for entertainment. On account of a clause in the Dominica constitution, they were barred from being participants in the democratic process. Moreover, they had grown to think of themselves as being unable to contribute to an all-English discussion, particularly by radio.

The true interpreters of that Kwéyòl existence in small-scale agriculture were Kadans Musicians. In seeking to create a revolutionary discourse they were limited only by the history of the people, their values and aspirations, the future of the youth and the potential of the music to forge solidarity among all Kwéyòl-speaking peoples of the Caribbean and the world.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> French Creole (Kwéyòl) which was spoken in the countries listed below, began to be treated with greater attention by linguists in the West Indies. This rising linguistic phenomenon in the Caribbean indicated the attempts by social scientists to give meaning to Caribbean culture. The territories listed below gives an indication of the span of French Creole regionally and internationally.

#### French Creole Territories

Name	*	Present Status	# of Speakers
Guadeloupe (f)	F	depart.	375,000
Martinique (f)	F	depart.	350,000
Guyane (f)	F	depart.	50,000
St. Lucia (f)	153 yrs.	indep.	150,000
Dominica (f)	113 yrs.	indep.	85,000
Grenada (f)	B in 1763	indep.	-----
Reunion (f)	F	depart.	500,000
Haiti (i)	137 yrs.	indep.	5,000,000
Louisiana (f)	75 yrs.	US State	70,000
Mauritius (f)	91 yrs.	indep.	1,000,000
Seychelles (f)	40 yrs.	indep.	65,000
Trinidad (never f)	B in 1797	indep.	10,000
Rodrigues (f)	B in 1809	dept. of Mauritius	35,000

f/F = French, B = British

\* = Number of years as colony

Guadeloupe, Martinique, Guyane and Reunion are French departments at present. Grenada, Trinidad and Rodrigues were occupied by the French and won over by the British in 1763, 1797 and 1809 respectively. A total of 8,190,000 persons worldwide speak French Creole, the largest population being in Haiti. Almost the entire Dominican population speaks French Creole (Kwéyòl). (Marcel D'Jamala Fontaine. *New Chronicle*. August 31 1990, p. 15).

Dominica was one contributor to the rising Kwéyòl phenomenon and Joseph succeeded in using Kwéyòl to forge a relationship between town and country, mental and manual labour, government and the electorate. But says socio-linguist Helen Rodney, "since ... the media could not have succeeded so well on its (sic) own, we must look to external factors such as the movements in national consciousness which (were) spreading throughout the Caribbean" (1982:29). Consistent with Rabess' (1989a) observation,<sup>11</sup> Magloire was to be quite clear about the emergence of Kwéyòl by radio. "Kwéyòl usage on radio in Dominica *really* began with the advent and introduction of a new aspect of Dominican culture - Kadans music ..." (1982:14 emphasis mine).<sup>12</sup> We should not, however, overlook Helen Rodney's observation of the wider national consciousness spreading throughout the Caribbean. In the 1970s the Caribbean was steeped in a revolutionary discourse, and intellectuals were breaking down complex economic and political theories.

Politically, Caribbean heads of government meeting at the St. Kitt's summit in May 1976, were firmly declaring their resentment against a lingering colonialism in the region. President of the Caribbean Development Bank, William Demas was calling for West Indian nationhood and economic unity. Jamaican thinkers such as C.Y. Thomas was writing without fear of contradiction that

democratic advance, the obtaining of individual and collective freedoms, have never been the product of bourgeois colonialist or imperialism generosity. The workers have won, through struggle, every limited democratic right they have ever had. And so it will always be (1977:2).

Trinidadian sociologist Susan Craig was quoting Nobel-prize winning economist, St. Lucian, Sir Arthur Lewis on the crisis in the Caribbean. According to Sir Arthur,

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<sup>11</sup> Rodney points to Rabess' earlier observation that Kadans was developed at a time when in Dominica issues of culture and identity were being debated in the context of Black Power and the emergence and spread of Rastafarianism. She was right to suggest looking outside of the media for the Kwéyòl influence.

<sup>12</sup> Says Devonish, "[W]ith this music being played on radio stations in Dominica and St. Lucia, it tended to act as a stimulus for the development of Creole language broadcasts on a medium which was formerly exclusively the preserve of English" (1986:74).

the recurrent crises in the Caribbean today will take to a new stage the conflict between wage labour (and wageless labour) and capital and the multiple-class alliance of the 1940s and 1950s which formed the electoral basis of the present order (1978:16).

As early as 1974 Dr. Marlene Cuthbert, then at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, Barbados was calling on Caribbean media owners

to encourage their media professionals (writers, broadcasters, producers and editors) to be fully responsible, *seeking out the voices and opinions of all groupings in the society*, whether these be politicians, advertisers, Churchmen, intellectuals or other elites (1974:16 emphasis mine).

Colonialism was under attack, there were calls for a united Caribbean, the workers' struggle from the 1940s was being placed in perspective and the people were being told that they had the power. Media practitioners and owners were called on to give access to alternative voices and the revolutionary motifs of Reggae, Calypso and Kadans were on every radio station in the Caribbean. The movements in Caribbean consciousness could also be found in the works of playwrights such as Dominican Alwin Bully, and St. Lucians Robert Lee and Fr. Patrick Anthony. Says Robert Lee,

Bully's landmark play, *Streak* was representative to me of Cadence Theatre, while his *Ruler* ... set its own calypso stage as its theme unfolded around political characters of the fifties and early sixties ... Bully's *Streak* was the "town cadence"... (1978:3).

The fact that Bully did not write *Ruler* but adapted the play from the Vincentian G.C.H. Thomas' *Ruler in Hiroona*, gives an indication of the cross-culturation which was taking place in the Caribbean. When Lee describes *Streak* as the "town cadence" he strikes at the central role that the music form played in the daily lives of the people. In its totality, *Streak* captured the maps of meaning, the values and ideas embodied in institutions, in social relations and in systems of belief. In short, *Streak* succeeded in capturing what Lee identified as "a modern Caribbean, both in theme, form and language" (1978:3). With theatre adopting Kadans and drawing audiences with its English and Kwéyòl mix, radio used the power of technology to transcend the town specificity. Says Henderson,

the music was upbeat and Kwéyòl was already a rich language. You wanted something that complemented the language. The music complemented the language and the language complemented the music. At that time Kadans was the 'in thing' and everybody was going for Kadans, even people who didn't really like the Kwéyòl language, but because of the music they were accepting the language (Interview September 1990).

Broadcaster Henderson was encouraged to go to the field in search of Kwéyòl-speaking elders, the old Queens and the Old Men. He interspersed his interviews with Kadans. He often found a complementarity between the wisdom of the old folk and the proverbs<sup>13</sup> tucked into the choruses of Musicians like "Chubby".

I think that was very valuable because people could switch back in their memories and remember the times when they used to go under the trees and tell stories. A lot of these things were being lost. Bringing it back on the radio, people could go back and identify with these things and repeat it, saying I remember this and I remember that (Ibid. 1990).

Henderson's statement reveals a formidable function, that of *inciting* reflection. Reflection is achieved says Freire, through dialogue, through a social communication process. True reflection motivated by lyrics and music led to action.<sup>14</sup> In truth the 1970s were the times for reflection, mobilization and the winning of freedoms. The lyrics which motivated the people toward those ends were mingled with their history of colonialism, sentiments over the injustices of the law and the drop in the standards of social services. Music has been and continues to be a

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<sup>13</sup> "Chubby" of the *Midnight Groovers* sang "allé soukwé sak ou o la'w vann schebon'w" ("Go shake your bag where you sold your coal"), meaning, go clean up your backyard.

Proverbs are used in instructing younger persons, particularly in semi-literate societies. Asli Gokhan makes the observation about Turkey where elders are greatly respected and the opinions of others are considered very important (1986:93).

Henderson found great interest in interviewing the older folk whom he said knew what it was to be Creole: a way of thinking, a way of relating with others, expressions, dance, foods and an entire relationship with their environment.

<sup>14</sup> In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* Paulo Freire writes, "[A]ttempting to liberate the oppressed without their reflective participation in the act of liberation is to treat them as objects which must be saved from a burning building; it is to lead them into the populist pitfall and transform them into masses which can be manipulated" (p. 41).

The electronic medium gained legitimacy to be a mediator in such a process, because of its adoption of the people's language and music. But the real dialogue was taking place at the community level, where as Henderson said the people would reflect (*memorize*) and present their thoughts to the media, musicians and composers.



powerful motivating force in the Caribbean.<sup>15</sup>

Except for the songs of the 1960s and 1985<sup>16</sup> North American popular music has restricted its lyrics predominantly to interpersonal relations bordering on eros. 65% of the lyrics in song magazines are love lyrics (Juneja 1989:38-39). In that context, Adorno (1946) recognized the consumer as a co-producer of musical meaning but regarded that practice only as supporting mass production. Walter Benjamin (1955; 1979) was not in agreement, stating that mechanical production has released art from its tie to ritual and enabled it to function politically (Robinson 1990:357).

The ritual of ghetto existence practised by Black American youths was released from its anomie through the process of mechanical production? What should be distinguished is production which speaks to a cause and that which trivializes eros. We must therefore see a difference between performance as resistance and performance which finds only commercial merit. Performance as resistance questions and criticizes social relations/structures, exposes oppression and calls for change (Koenig 1989:43). Rap, Calypso, Kadans and the music of the 1960s (were) are involved in engineering change on the basis of perceived (and studied) inequities (Abrahams 1983:xviii). Joseph, a musician and one who had studied closely the North American music scene, sensed the inevitability of the 1960s protest movements and song spilling over in the Caribbean. At the expense of being criticized by the government executives

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<sup>15</sup> Wilson writing of Jamaica (and by extension, the Caribbean) said that music as part of the Jamaican political process dates back from the epoch of slavery when slaves expressed their resentment through drumming, ring games and ritualized folk traditions. Resistance to British colonialism manifested itself in two forms, namely political rebellion and retention of indigenous traditions and popular culture (1990:98). Popular culture in the Caribbean, says Lent (1990), has been grossly understudied.

<sup>16</sup> The year of the Ethiopian famine when *We Are The World* (American) and *Tears Are Not Enough* (Canadian) were composed. According to Bruce Pollock editor of *Popular Music*, "trends of protest and nostalgia, themes of sex and violence, and the demands of proliferating film and television productions combined to make 1985 a year of American song creation nearly unparalleled in history. The revival played on several stages, not the least of which was the political arena in Washington, DC - site of so many marches and demonstrations in the sixties, song's last such gleaming moment in the sun" (1985:13).

and the keepers of colonial hegemony, he launched into reflection and the interpreting of his social reality and that of his audience.

We go back to the war dances of the ancient African Tribes .... We love fun, gaiety, festive music, anything else will only be tolerated. When we complain about lack of our public's response, we should consider this perhaps, "is it the type of compositions and not the public taste that is the trouble?" (Joseph 1988:19).

A public fired by social protests was receiving the compositions of Kadans musicians in the 1970s. The uses and gratifications theorists would consider them as active participants in selecting from a wide variety of music(s). Paul Willis cited in Robinson, contends that a group of British scholars saw otherwise and, we must contend, saw partially correctly. Willis states that there develops a continuous play between the group receiving the music and a particular item, say the record, where the consumer plays the music over and over. It produces specific styles, meanings, contents and forms of consciousness (Robinson 1986:359).

That was exactly the case with Kadans, except, the styles produced and the meanings shared were part of the way of life of the people. They developed their *mystique* in that they were now being related in song through the air waves, but were saying what the people had already thought of but could not formulate for liberation. Moreover, Kadans lyrics transcended the Dominican specificity. For example "Grammacks" in *Cauchemar* (Nightmare 1975) sang of their difficulties as musicians, but the song related to the plight of the homeless, a phenomenon which is today gripping the inner cities of the world's developed countries.

Dépi le temps de creation, maintenant dans evolution  
Mwen mangé a la rue, mwen dormi a la pli  
Et gens mwen toujours sal et shifonné, vannt-a-mwen gwo épi gonnflé  
Mwen lay twje kor-a-mwen, mé mwen toujours faim

Since the days of creation, now in evolution  
I've eaten in the streets, slept in the rain  
And my people were always dirty and rumpled, my stomach big and swollen  
I want to kill myself, but I'm always hungry

*Cauchemar* is a serious reflection on the life of the poor in the underdeveloped world, but it also reveals the plight of the poor and unemployed in the developed world. When in 1975 "Exile One" sang an ode to International Women's Year, they too demonstrated a connection

with international issues. "Milestone", another Dominican band based in Guadeloupe in the 1970s, called for Love and Peace in *L'Amour et La Paix*.

Tou les jours sé la guerre, moun ka souffè  
On lo moun en mizè, sa pa nécessaire  
Nou pé vivv en samn  
Mé fon nou kompwan  
Sé l'amou, sé la pays  
Sé l'amou, sé sa nou ka manndé

Each day so many people are suffering  
A whole lot of people live in misery  
That's not necessary  
We can live together  
But we must understand  
That it's love and it's peace  
We are asking for.

The people found a renewed reciprocity, as the lyrics of the musicians irritated the hegemonic forces (**confrontation**), opened gaps in the dominant discourse (**rupture**), and called for the construction of a more just and egalitarian society (**anticipation**). In the words of *Grammacks*, "musik la lèvé on lo puissance." The music had uncovered, revealed a whole body of force. *Dictionnaire Moderne Francais-Anglais* (Librairie Larousse, 1960) defines "puissr 'ce" as power, strength, force. Kwéyòl-speaking peoples understood the use of the French "puissance" in their daily speech. They were, however, more likely to use the word *force* or *dayba'* in place of "puissance".

Whether the word used was "puissance" or *force*, the people's *good sense* had found refuge in the ideological formation of Kadans musicians. Hall defined *good sense* as "an instinctive understanding of the basic conditions of life and the nature of the constraints and forms of exploitation". But, he added, "it always requires a further work of political education and cultural politics to renovate and clarify these constructions of popular thought - 'common sense'" (1986a:21). The cultural politics of the musicians such as "Grammacks" was, for example, enshrined in the use of the word *dayba* (trouble) to describe the effect of the force of the music and at the same time, to define the ideological environment, the political, economic and social crisis. As if to suggest that only the Musicians could have found meaning

in the people's good sense, Gille Fontaine sang "o la musik la nou té yé, o la musik nou té sèwé" ("where was our music, where was it hidden").

The Grandbay based group "Black Machine" would use the names of well-known village dancers in their songs. These people had never been known before. Their lives meant something only within the limits of their village community. The radio program "Espéwéanse Kwéyòl" became the hit of Dominica and the French-speaking Caribbean, and went on in its heyday to establish relay links with St. Lucia and Guadeloupe. Broadcasting in Dominica was transformed.

But the success of Kadans musicians at *formalizing* Kwéyòl was not achieved without resistance. They were communicating a way of thinking utilizing a language, images, categories and themes, disturbing to those who posed a claim to power-knowledge. Government executives claimed knowledge of the operations of colonial hegemony: *good government*, peace, order and stability. They exercised the power to censor ideas in lyrics which did not tally with government objectives, and more specifically, did not comprise *good taste* and a *proper outlook*.

The elite made claim to a knowledge of what they thought good government should be and regarded the decision to use Kwéyòl by radio as being of little if any value to national linguistic development. And the government itself was armed to meet any resistance to its Socialist ideology which implied among other factors, the protection of Dominica's cultural heritage. Musicians regarded their knowledge of the history of Dominica as legitimate and worthy of expression.

The ensuing tensions among the above forces became a struggle for power and an impetus to eliciting the most potent forms of resistance from each group. The struggle to communicate and its ensuing contradictions produced a political consciousness unprecedented

in the history of Dominica.<sup>17</sup>

### Censoring the Popular Song

Sue Jansen contends that if all communication are attempts to control, influence, persuade, incite, annoy, refute, correct, pacify, enchant or otherwise connect with others, then "all communication aspires to create power-knowledge" (1988:98). In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault explains that power and knowledge directly imply one another, adding that there is no knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations. Calypso King of the world "The Mighty Sparrow" of Trinidad and Tobago summed it up nicely, and added a third dimension when he sang, "Knowledge is Power, Wisdom is Force" (*Parables*, 1975).

According to Foucault, power-knowledge must be analyzed on the basis of the subject who knows and the objects to be known. He is quoted by Megill (1985:249) as calling for an understanding of the processes and struggles that traverse the formation of power-knowledge. What Foucault did not grasp was what "The Mighty Sparrow" understood: the resistance that

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<sup>17</sup> The right to communicate was so politically significant in the 1970s that when Dominica attained its independence in 1978, then leader of the Opposition Eugenia Charles addressed the gathering on the issue of freedom of speech. Among the dignitaries present was Princess Margaret, the Queen's representative. Charles said, "we boast that we have freedom of speech but let us examine the reality of the situation. In a country where the only radio is owned and operated by the government and no opposition voices are permitted on that most effective medium, can one say that we really believe in freedom of speech? When time and time again ministers of government and some officials are permitted to abuse persons opposed to government without the right being given to such persons to explain their side, to reply in similar vein - but merely to explain the other side, can it be said that we even understand the true spirit of freedom of speech? When officers of the radio station state categorically that they will not have any news items on the radio about members of the opposition and they are allowed to carry on with this policy without any let or hindrance, are we really adhering to the human right of freedom of speech?" (1988:10).

Officers of the radio station in 1990 were not guided by any explicit policy. They knew which items would annoy the Charles administration. In attempting to adopt a neutral and objective line they now respond to the intricacies of the free-market economy. They make room for dissent, but that dissent is ineffective to the higher workings of capital.

regimes of truth emanating from the masses encounter in a social formation. Foucault by design "evaded any attempt to pin down power in a socially and institutionally specific way" (Ibid. p. 250).

Grossberg cites Hall as arguing that there are different regimes of truth in the social formation, contending for the site on which power-knowledge is being constructed. According to Hall, Foucault's regimes of truth and their functions of normalization, regulation and surveillance were constitutive of an ideology, and there were dominant ideologies and subordinated regimes of truth (Grossberg 1986a:45-49). Foucault's regimes of truth appear co-functional with Habermas' *emancipatory interests*,<sup>18</sup> serving in the formation of epistemological foundations which have their merits as starting points to a revolutionary discourse.

In the context of Dominica in the 1970s, there were contending regimes of truth each seeking, in the words of Sue Jansen (1988:88) "to communicate their power-knowledge skewed by a spiral of perceptual, linguistic, organizational and hierarchical priorities". The elite and their economic corporate interests constituted what Devonish refers to as a significant "English-lexicon Creole-speaking minority" (1986:73), and were intent on playing a role in deciding the ideas expressed in the popular song.

Many functioned as Carnival organizers. Joseph recalled one season when members of the Carnival Organizing Committee prevented the recording of songs by radio if they were not *all* going to be rebroadcast. Middle-class professionals who constituted the system of alliances during the economic and political crisis supported the art form thereby containing its motifs. Calypsonians, armed with the knowledge of the economic and political conditions existent in the Dominican society between 1974 and 1978 sought to incite, inform, annoy,

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<sup>18</sup> Habermas speaks of an interest in the reflective appropriation of human life without which the interest-bound character of knowledge could not itself be grasped. According to David Held (1980:255), "this is an interest in reason, in the human capacity to be self-reflective and self-determining, to act rationally". Knowledge is generated which enhances autonomy and responsibility, hence, its emancipatory interest. It is in fact, a fine epistemological instrument.

refute, persuade, correct, enchant through entertainment, and above all to communicate. They did not attempt to control. The control function was conducted by the censors.

In 1977 "Shakey" won with *Dayba Pou Dayba* and in 1978 "Ency" won with *We Doe Want You*. They represented the highest level of cultural resistance to the John administration. "Shakey's" *Dayba Pou Dayba* was both informing, annoying and enchanting. Neither the broadcasters nor the government officials cared to control the broadcast of the song by radio. And if the judges who sometimes were composed of persons who supported the regime in power, had attempted to deny him the crown the audience would have rebelled.

Alternatively, "Ency's" *We Doe Want You*<sup>19</sup> was a straight political statement with a military backdrop. Radio played "Shakey's" but not "Ency's". A radio station subsidized by the government in power could not be seen to be expressing *loyalty* by playing a song whose lyrics called on the Speaker of the House of Assembly "to get out". Radio staff *contained* meanings which they regarded as politically motivated.

Because of the kind of atmosphere that exists in a very small country when you have a government in power, you have a situation where the members, the people who work in the radio station are of the view, especially in my particular case when I was in fact associated very strongly with the Labour Party, that to do that would be to offend. There was a pulling away from songs which tended to be critical of the government. In those days the calypsonians were part and parcel of the opposition (Joseph, Interview September 1990).

As a music director, band leader and excellent composer, Joseph would be aware that music on its own ignores theoretical correctives and dissolves dogma whenever it wishes. It revels in neither reification nor chaos, "spreading itself between those two poles, knowing about both

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<sup>19</sup> We doe want you, we doe want you  
 We doe want your regime anymore  
 Tell your ministers to go, doe campaign here no more  
 You can tell the Speaker its time to get out  
 We doe want you, we doe want you  
 You can pack up all your wax and make your tracks  
 No confidence in the government ....

of them, but existing only in the tension between them, by which it is energized" (Henze 1982:125). The introduction of lyrics tells of a desire to incite, to persuade, to connect with, to inform through particularly constructed signifiers, through a particular ideology locked in a much-loved rhythm.

Language is the medium through which ideology is generated and transformed. But, says Hall, in language the same social relation can be differently "represented and construed" (1986b:36). The representation used by Calypsonians such as "Ency" and at times "Spider" were not constitutive of the implicit ideological terrain mapped out for radio staff. It would not be right to say the staff *lived* an ideology wherein they tolerated no other frames of reference. If that were so they would have *pulled away* from "Robin's" *Independence*, which questioned the preparedness of the nation for independence.<sup>20</sup> They were also the news people who were acquainted with the regional furor over independence for the colonies.<sup>21</sup> What can be said is that their understanding of Caribbean and Dominica politics was constrained by the ideological context within which they worked.

They also construed the ideas expressed in the language used by Calypso as irritating to the echelons of power. By not banning "Spider's" *Mass Without Class*, were they agreeing that social differences on the basis of wealth existed and needed to be commented on? In fact,

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<sup>20</sup> With Independence, will it create more employment  
Or will we have more enslavement,  
With Independence, will we have more industry  
Or will we live in misery.

<sup>21</sup> At a summit of Caribbean leaders in St.Kitt's in July 1976, Caribbean Community Governments expressed their resentment against a lingering colonialism in the region, calling for independence in the associated states (Singh 1976:5).

Jacqueline Anne-Braveboy reviewing "Independence for Grenada - Myth or Reality" (ISER, Barbados), highlighted concern over how the politically independent countries could solve their problems when still economically dependent (*Caribbean Contact*, February 1975, p. 3).

By 1978 Earl Huntley was comparing the Dominica and St. Lucia drive for independence, highlighting the resentment felt by opposition groups in both countries. The Dominica opposition argued that the government was employing incorrect methods (*Caribbean Contact*, August 1978, p. 17).



like "Spider", they were aware of the social relations in the city, but construed those as posing no direct threat to the power structure which gave legal direction to the national broadcasting corporation. Class differences could be satirized and tolerated, but the politicians who were part and parcel of that class tension were not to be attacked as individuals. "Spider" construed differently, using radio's much publicized *Zodiac of the Day* as metaphor, to scathe the Attorney General. He could be considered the bravest Calypsonian of the 1970s. He sang,

The Zodiac say and still say, Leo represents the Lion  
 He can also be an egoistic politician  
 Parillon saw corruption in the regiment  
 So like a champ he proudly walked out parliament  
 Singing sweet psalms just like David  
 Out of the old testament.  
 Psalm of David, Psalm of David  
 Draw me as you draw Parillon<sup>22</sup>  
 Psalm of David, Psalm of David  
 Cannot live under Leo Law.

Leo Austin was the drafter of the Dominica Broadcasting Corporation Act, the Prohibited and Unlawful Associations and Societies Act and the Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act.<sup>23</sup> The song was not rebroadcast, but when *Psalm of David* was first performed at Carnival City the song drew cheers from the audience when "Spider" sang in his last verse "no man is above the law, to hide his corruption". The song could serve the function of *synthesis* by breaking down complex political activity at the performance site, but it was denied entry to the airwaves. Radio was also protected and closely watched by government and opposition legal practitioners.

Unlike Calypso in the 1970s Kadans was recorded for broadcast on state-of-the-art equipment, and its lyrical content could be decided only by the musicians who, as we saw,

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<sup>22</sup> Then Minister for Home Affairs. Parillon walked out of parliament when he realized that the crisis was brewing in the John administration.

<sup>23</sup> The Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act was aimed at limiting the right to strike among civil servants and workers in essential services and sought to prevent persons from giving financial assistance to striking union workers. Austin also had on the table a Libel and Slander Act. Says Honeychurch, it was designed to protect Austin who had been facing "widespread criticism in the local press over his foreign deals and his handling of official duties while at the same time working for private clients dealing with the government" (Honeychurch 1984:205).

were committed to motifs of reflection, economic exploitation, Africa, the black person, justice and human rights. Recording companies in Guadeloupe and Martinique attempted to persuade the Dominican musicians to relinquish the protest role for one which came close to a French concept of *eros*, lacking the call and response techniques and basically, devoid of Calypso.<sup>24</sup> But unlike the French musicians, Dominican musicians were committed to a cause, a struggle. Ophelia Marie was part of that struggle. In 19762 Ophelia's *Aie Donnrik* was banned from the airwaves. "That song sort of came out while I was on campus"<sup>25</sup> where every country in the Caribbean is represented and sometimes a few countries outside. And the Dominicans took a good licking for what was happening in Dominica at the time" (Interview, September 1990). Dreads were being shot, the parliament was in disorder. There were demonstrations and strikes and attempts at economic development were not being maintained (Honeychurch 1984:194). The song was banned when it asked the question "who is destroying you?". Says Ophelia,

they knew the answers so I guess that's why the song had to be stopped on the airwaves for a while. It's a very simple song and it appealed to the senses of the people at the time. They were feeling the pain that I was feeling and I was in fact expressing their sentiments, in toto and to the letter (Interview, September 1990).

"Ophelia" used the Kwéyòl, "sa ki ka détwi'w?" ("who's destroying you?"). While the language as an expression of an authentic Dominican identity was welcomed, the ideas expressed were annoying to the keepers of a particular regime of truth. In saying that the people were feeling the pain that she was feeling Ophelia was linking her identity with the people in mutual communication, serving the function of *rupture*. As a subject she could

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<sup>24</sup> Even when "Exile One" played in France firstly, they sounded *strange* to the audience. The music was not appealing to the people. As the people were most familiar with the Haitian form of music, "Exile One" changed their rhythm on stage immediately, adding the Haitian form of cymbals with their Calypso rhythm. Kadans became a form of music overnight.

According to Williams "right away we got a deal to record, where we were receiving 40,000 francs ... we had no instruments so we had to rent equipment and we just played the music. We thought of some old Dominican songs and it (sic) made it. Kadans is a mixture of the different forms of Caribbean music from Haiti to Trinidad, and as Cadence was a Haitian form of music we added the Calypso and called it cadence-lypso" (Fitzroy Williams, Interview, September 1990). After *legitimizing* the music, the protest lyrics were added.

<sup>25</sup> Ophelia was then a student at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, Barbados.

identify the objective conditions and create a body of knowledge which was resisted by the censors, but which empowered the people. Radio's role would be both eclipsed and revealed.

When "Chubby" sang *Lwa K'Afekté Nou* over the passing of the Dread Act, the song was banned but was regarded by Rastafarians/Dreads and other groups of resistance in the community, particularly the 2,000 residents of Grandbay, as the song which reflected best the relationship of the repressive and ideological state apparatuses and the victims of the Act. The fact that the Dread Act as a piece of legislation was being defeated constantly in the courts of law did not deter the censors. Section 3 of the Act, wrote Honeychurch, was worded in a manner which encompassed every society (1984:189), and 95% of the times the Dread had to be caught with marijuana which served as the only piece of evidence before the law (Honeychurch, Interview, September 1990).

Ironically, *Pou yon Koko* was not banned although the context within which it was created was a violation of the Praedial Larceny Act. That laws should be adapted to the people for whom they were made and insure both the health and stability of society (Johnson 1988:118) was a truism skewed in the direction of the powerful. According to "Chubby", "lajol Domnik sé ani pou nou malawé" ("Dominica's laws are against the poor").

"Chubby's" *Milk and Honey* was not banned. Although its call for a concentrated effort to boost local production slipped outside of the economic corporate and class corporate interests, the song suggested the creation of an economic unity with the requirement that it be rooted in the culture of the people. "The oppressors have changed our scene, we need to build back ourselves, Oh Lord, Oh Lord, Bring back the Milk and Honey". Chubby's text interpellated all regimes of truth but each regime held its own body of truths, interests and ideology.

Those of the economic corporate groupings were certainly antagonistic to the rural, small-scale holding farmers and their non-acquisitiveness and non-individualistic natures. Class corporate groupings in the city were directed by laws of economic determinism and could not

understand the pain that Ophelia spoke of, neither were they interested in salvaging the homeless contents and values of the imagination that Marcuse cited and Nettleford hailed! As another class corporate grouping in the society, the majority rural people were always capable of expressing a free creative spirit while resisting attempts to be drawn into the economic corporate trappings of wage labour after emancipation and into the 1970s.

Rastafarians/Dreads ["Chubby"] and the many Musicians and Composers carried the message of the people to their political representatives. They, particularly the Musicians succeeded in gaining legitimacy within the official communication arm and were suggesting through popular song and language, ways of facilitating a political, economic, intellectual and cultural unity.

### Summary and Conclusion

When the Musicians and Composers critiqued the political and economic conditions in Dominica, their main instrument was a body of ideas. By expressing those ideas in Kwéyòl and English Creole respectively, their revolutionary discourse complemented the mobilization of popular and intellectual forces in Dominica and by extension, the Caribbean.

I attempted to show that the linguistic contribution made by Kadans transformed the prescribed role of radio and its initial all-English policy. Radio would no longer be an instrument for transmitting information and education only, but would be part of the social communication process by the mere fact that it was prepared to adopt the language, music and folk-ways of the people. To the elite, the popular culture had penetrated the official culture, while to the politicians the adoption of Kwéyòl was an opportunity to propagate their ideas and knowledge.

Radio's news and production policy was transformed.<sup>26</sup> It could no longer define reality without defining the people's reality. Its selected definitions of the *real* came under severe criticism, and its future structuring and shaping of information would subsequently reveal the dichotomy between town and country. Reflecting on the use of Creole on radio in Caribbean societies Devonish noted that,

the post-colonial linguistic status quo is beginning to crumble in the mass media. The most important symbol of that crumbling has been the use of Creole as the main language in its local news broadcasts ... The effectiveness of Creole as a medium for communicating with the mass of the population is slowly over-riding the symbolic value of English as the sole officially sanctioned language in the mass media (1986:98).

The fact that it was through music and its lyrics that that development became possible in Dominica in the 1970s is a clear indication of the power of cultural expression in Caribbean societies. It was this expression which was ignored if not suppressed by the colonialists, development planners and pundits of modernization.

Efforts made by government officials to control popular cultural expression were not inconsistent with government's attempts at containing the practices of the Dreads, intellectuals and activists, trade unions and opposition politicians. The fact that popular forces sought to contain the motifs of the popular song in the hope of further irritating government's regimes of truth demands further study and research.

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<sup>26</sup> Henderson contends that the first bit of Kwéyòl was used by a government Press Secretary (Information Officer) in 1974, but that never gathered momentum. Kwéyòl was introduced on a regular basis (one hour per week) in September 1975. In 1976 the national news in Kwéyòl was introduced in addition to a lively night show called *Nou Memm* (We Ourselves). By 1977 Kwéyòl usage had increased from one hour per week to five hours with the introduction of *Espéwéanse Kwéyòl*.

By 1978 Kwéyòl programming occupied seven and a half hours out of seventeen hours of programming. According to Magloire who did the count, by 1981 out of approximately 102 hours of broadcasting, 8 hours was allotted to Kweyol (1982:15). In 1988 the morning program on the Dominica Broadcasting Corporation was called *Bonjour Dominik* (Good Morning Dominica), a five minute morning magazine was called *Santé Nou* (Our Health). *Espéwéanse Kwéyòl* was then one and a half hours with the following advertisements - Mitsubishi, Astaphan, Lada, Security Creole and Jolly's - delivered in Kwéyòl.

The effect of Kwéyòl usage on the English-speaking broadcasters is still to be studied. A significant starting point could be their love for Kadans music, their *unwillingness* to speak Kwéyòl, their background and socialization and reasons for being in broadcasting in *farm country*.

Overall, there was an implicit insistence on maintaining radio's early policies and promises of enlisting loyalty and promoting tranquillity and unity. In the 1970s, development in Dominica was inconsistent with tranquillity and unity. Development which brings the satisfaction of basic needs without structural changes in the social and political system will be the flesh devoid of spirit in the further absence of a concern for identity, self-esteem and freedom. Power which refuses to consider alternative forms of knowledge, particularly those forms rooted in the history and material existence of the people will be blind to the periodic incursions of restlessness which grip the Caribbean masses almost inevitably. If culture as expressed in song has served as the pedagogy of the oppressed for hundreds of years it will be returned to continually in times of social, political and economic crisis.

Chapter Five will serve a dual purpose. It will first analyze the preceding four. But this analysis will be used frequently as a point of departure for the examination of Dominica and beyond the 1970s. I will examine Dominica today, what has been lost and gained in the historical process.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DOMINICA, THE 1970S AND BEYOND

Children of Tomorrow, Take good care  
(Grammacks, 1975)

Have no fear for atomic energy  
Cause none of them can stop the times  
(Bob Marley, *Redemption Song*)

The capability of artistic expression to open gaps in the dominant discourse has been and will continue to be a subject of debate in Dominica and the Caribbean. The unity process now being forged in the region will continue to suffer an inward hunger for as long as Musicians, Composers, Playwrights, Sculptors, Dramatists and Dancers<sup>1</sup> are denied their rightful place in that historical process. While the debate over the role of the artist rages in the Caribbean, popular theatre, the cinema and the Nueva Cancion in Latin America are being inserted into the popular culture "at precisely those points where we find the forms and language of folklore excluded from the 'cultural industry' controlled by the transnational capitalist system" (Matta 1988:447). Dominica in the 1970s could not boast of a culture industry, but the points at which Kadans entered the musical world were significant. Using the popular language and folklore as bases, Kadans facilitated the adoption of Kwéyòl on national radio. Kwéyòl was a language once considered derogatory. Today the music and language are intrinsic to the Dominican cultural identity.

Calypso has always informed working people of the Caribbean, and like Kadans in the 1970s came to be appreciated by all classes. Despite efforts by a few Calypsonians to resist the containment of their themes, the Calypso has been the genre to encounter greater censorship. This is particularly so because of its history of open confrontation with the powers that be and a commitment to airing the problems of the poor, illiterate, disadvantaged and

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<sup>1</sup> They are all capitalized to emphasize their importance.

fearful. It is left to be seen whether Musicians and Composers will find the point of entry at the correct historical moment and serve as forces of cultural resistance in the next decade.

This chapter will briefly analyze the preceding four chapters. The analysis will serve as a point of departure into the 1980s and 1990s. I will, therefore, seek "the sum total of the logic of the historical process" (Hauser 1982:360) setting aside the tendency<sup>2</sup> to separate the decade of the 1970s and the two which were subsequent to it. I intend to trace the Caribs, the Roman Catholic Church, Dreads, intellectuals and activists, and aspects of Dominica's political economy. This analysis will be facilitated using Calypso lyrics from 1980, 1990 and 1991. Secondly, Kadans will be located at exactly those points where it was least expected to resurge, that is, in 1987. This is intended to demonstrate that the old is subsumed in the new. The latter exercise will be conducted by highlighting the refrain of one song by Kadans founder, Gordon Henderson.

### **Dominica After Patrick John**

On May 29 1979, Patrick Roland John fell from power. It was a civil uprising. Of the distinguishing recollections in Dominica's history, he will be known for having taken the country into independence on November 3, 1978, an independence which in the words of Merle Hodge "has been turned on its head" (1986:91). Little is known about the spirit of freedom which he personally granted to Calypsonians being a writer of Calypsos himself. In the field of artistic expression he had one regret. In an interview conducted at his house in Dominica, he reflected and said "just as Trinidad claimed Calypso and Jamaica claimed Reggae, I should have claimed Kadans" (September 1990). Whether John will ever have the

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<sup>2</sup> The author has observed this tendency in political parties which, on assuming power lead the population to believe that all development began when they entered office. Though this remains pragmatic it does no justice to the logic of the historical process with which this thesis is concerned. Moreover, there are indications that the forces which were driven underground in the 1970s will return in the 1990s, albeit more complex and organized.



opportunity to reclaim products of the cultural territory he so subtly guarded is anybody's guess. He is no longer inclined toward the Dominica Labour Party and the chemistry of the United Workers Party disturbs him. As for the Dominica Freedom Party, there is no doubt that he would be a square peg in a round hole. Still in limbo as to his future political career he continues to provide satirical compositions for Calypsonians such as "Pickey" and others.

Almost one month following John's fall from power Oliver Seraphine was sworn in as interim Prime Minister with an election scheduled for July of the following year. Seraphine was to find Kadans founder, Gordon Henderson willing to take up the post of manager of the Dominica Broadcasting Corporation. Henderson's efforts at establishing a musical link with the French departments of Martinique and Guadeloupe, St. Lucia and Haiti was thwarted only by the forces of nature. On August 29, 1979 Dominica was devastated by one of the worst hurricanes to hit the Caribbean in 100 years. As the economic situation worsened and the post-David reconstruction sped up, Kadans musicians would go into voluntary exile in the French departments, Paris and New York, preferring to receive the news of Seraphine's defeat at the polls rather than restricting themselves to the invective of small island political discourse.

The Eugenia Charles administration which came to power in 1980 presented a rigid economic agenda which drew its artistic support from the expressions in the traditional folk-song. That genre of commentary adopted an interpretation of Dominica highlighting in Kwéyòl the beauty of its environment and people, and sought to bridge the disarticulation between tourism and development. Central to the tourism drive were cottage industries, the flora and fauna of the island, its wildlife, its peace and stability and the Carib people.

### **Caribs, Dreads and Intellectuals**

Thirteen years ago Dominican Hilroy Thomas reported to the *Caribbean Contact* that Dominica's Caribs had not been given legal title to the land for which they had been struggling for years (1978:18). Today one certificate of title for all the land is kept by the Carib Chief.

This means that as a community the Caribs have rights to their land, but as individuals in a modern world they have no collateral.

In 1989 Dominica issued a series of thirty-five cent stamps bearing a Carib man and woman wearing loin cloths and carrying bows and arrows. At the base of the rectangle were the words, "500th anniversary of the discovery of the Americas - Pre-Columbian societies and their customs". Dominica is seeking to be at the forefront in marking the 500th anniversary of Columbus' landing in the Caribbean.<sup>3</sup> In 1978 Thomas wrote, "Dominica does not have a colour problem in the traditional sense, but this country stands guilty of perpetuating racist and oppressive policies against its first inhabitants, the native Caribs" (1978:10). Dominica is likely to be proven guilty a second time for perpetuating racist and oppressive policies against its first inhabitants. The Roman Catholic Church in Dominica may be the only institution to seek to connect the Caribs with a past that it itself helped destroy.

In May 1991 a new Church was opened at the Carib Territory. It contained a canoe-shaped altar. According to Felix Augustine Jr., "a look inside the church reveals a mixture of contemporary styles mixed with those of days gone by. The beautifully painted murals took one back to the times when the Carib culture was at its purest" (1991:4). Such oblations will be meaningful when the church stands up for justice and equality for Carib people come 1992.

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<sup>3</sup> In 1992 more than 20 countries worldwide will be celebrating the 500th anniversary of Columbus' landing in the Caribbean and the Americas. Countries in Europe and Central and South America will be the major participants. Nations such as the United States, Israel and Japan will also play a role. In these countries, government commissions have been established to develop campaigns. The Vatican is also involved, having been planning for some years now "500 Years of Evangelization in the Western Hemisphere". The initiative began with the Spanish government, which is hosting the Olympic games and the World's Fair in 1992.

Says Paul McKenna (1990), "for the indigenous peoples of the Americas, for Black people ... there's nothing to celebrate in 1992. When Columbus arrived there were 80 million people living in the Americas. Within 150 years, the native population was reduced to less than 8 million. In Haiti there was a population of 200,000. Twenty years later, there were only 29,000 inhabitants".

The Dominica Caribs numbered 5,000 in 1647. By the dawn of the eighteenth century they had been reduced to 2,000. Illness and emigration to the Orinoco region where they had originated brought them down by 1713 to some 500. By 1730 they would be a mere 400, compared with the 1,300 odd on St. Vincent (Borome 1972a:81).

The organization which Rastafari/Dread called *Babylon* will be restless as Rome emerges in 1992 as a supporter of Columbus' landing in the Caribbean. But indications are it will stand by Rome's teachings.

Caught within the dilemma of the African (religious) culture and the pristine rituals of Rome, the Catholic Church pretends to be unaware of the self-exploitative consequences of Dominica's present free-market economy. Intent on propagating its rituals it might not have anticipated, or might have cared to accommodate in its newspaper *The New Chronicle*, the voice of "Mepuis Lover" (Lover of Quarrels).

Members of Church Council  
 You want to refine our colcha?  
 You want to purify and cleanse  
 Our spicy, zesty meetings  
 By ridding them of their salt and pepper?  
 If there is no mepuis  
 Who will leave their TV?  
 (New Chronicle, May 18 1990, p. 18).

In the 1970s the Church was covertly involved in resistance to the Patrick John administration. Today its dilemma is exacerbated by questionable internal practices, and undoubtedly the external relations of its parent body with Spain and the United States. Internally, "Rabbit", Dominica's most censored Calypsonian lashed out at the priests in his 1990 composition *Ban*. He sang,

If I say priest not good at all, they banning me  
 Collection in a funeral, they banning me  
 If I sing 'bout de priest in Wesley, they banning me  
 Who make baby an' run Miami, they banning me.

But lest one thinks these practices to be restricted to the Roman Catholic Church, we should read what "Bouteille" sang in 1991.

Today we doe know what is best  
 Every thing we try is a pest  
 Politicians we trust,  
 We get double-cross  
 People now on protest  
 Den we turn to religion  
 To ease de frustration  
 But is more commotion,

*All dey talk is capital*  
 Their morals down de canal (emphasis mine).

Canal is used here to mean gutter. I suspect "Bouteille" of singing about the unorthodox televangelists, "the modern replay of the unholy alliance" (Hodge 1986:93). Moreover, his composition gives an indication of the contradictions facing institutions still held in high respect in the Dominican society. As contributors to national development the Calypsonians were questioning the moral worth of leaders of religious institutions.

Latent and momentarily emerging in the minds of "Bouteille", "Rabbit" and "Mepuis Lover" are remains of Rastafari/Dread ideology which spurned false consciousness and mindless television. Indications that the memories of Rastafari/Dread live on were clearly captured by "Rabbit" in *Ban*.

If I sing 'bout de government, they banning me  
 Oh what they do wrong and when, they banning me  
 If I sing 'bout dem cocaine men, they banning me  
 They let them in but ban Rastamen,<sup>4</sup> they banning me.

Rastamen were banned and "Rabbit" expected to be banned for his articulation of government's repressive tendencies. What neither the government of the 1970s nor that of the 1980s and beyond will appreciate is that culture is simultaneously the fruit of a people's history and a determinant of history, "by the *positive* or *negative* influence which it exerts on the evolution of relationships between 'man' and his environment, among men or groups of men within a society, as well as among different societies" (Cabral 1970:4 emphasis mine).

Few were prepared to reap the fruit of that history of resistance so forcefully as Pharcelle the Maroon did in 1786<sup>5</sup>, or Tumba Galloway in the 1970s. Indeed the political

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<sup>4</sup> Rastamen used marijuana for greater spiritual insight into the contradictions of *Babylon*. While marijuana bore some relationship with insight, spiritual understanding and the unity of the objective and subjective consciousness, cocaine has presented no philosophy except that of violence, crime and destruction.

<sup>5</sup> According to Honeychurch, "what we know of that Maroon chief is full of contradictions. He seems to have aided the French in their conquest in 1778. In the 1780s messages are being exchanged between himself and the British Assembly. In 1791 Orde offers "a considerable additional reward to those who take the rebel Pharcelle." Honeychurch agreed

resistance demonstrated by the opposition forces was characteristic of the Dominican political consciousness from the 1930s.<sup>6</sup> The fact that the trade unions gravitated toward complacency in the 1980s represented a deception of its fervent activity among the peasants and working people of Dominica.<sup>7</sup>

Musicians and Composers were also to reap the fruits of French and British plantation cultural activity. Their critical consciousness is an ineradicable and hard-won perception of social reality. They, like the Rastafarians/Dreads emerging in the 1990s<sup>8</sup> (were) are at least concerned with the (re)birth of a critical aspect of Dominican culture.

The appearance and disappearance of those moments of resistance will keep determining the nation's budgetary allocation to the military and police services. The frequency of political, economic and cultural resistance will determine the strategy of the nation's ideological apparatuses, its methods of concentrating power, and means of disseminating and controlling knowledge.

When in the 1980s US President Ronald Reagan launched his campaign for the minds

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that he was a man "whose life and activities is still shrouded by the dusty papers of the archives" (1984:79).

<sup>6</sup> The 1930s were years of political unrest and transformation. Plans at forging a West Indian Federation and self-government were launched in Dominica. Says Honeychurch, "seventeen delegates comprising some of the most progressive West Indian leaders, met to discuss and plan the future of the region ... Their ideas were passionate and idealistic ..." (1984:128).

<sup>7</sup> In the late 1930s and beyond, the trade union in Dominica was active among the tenants on estates.

<sup>8</sup> In 1990 Dominica hosted Judy Mowatt, Maxi Priest, Ziggy Marley and Yellowman. On May 31, 1991 the reggae group "Culture" performed in Dominica. They are all Rastafarians/Dreads. Those are rather simple observations, but the close-knit nature of the Dominican society make them significant. Dominica now has a six-man group known as "The Flintstones Band". They all wear locks and one of the members of that band is Carl Winston, Dominica's most prolific painters in the 1970s. Winston went into recluse in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and has returned in the 1990s playing reggae. According to his brother Dave, the choice of music was something automatic and the members of the band had a certain feel and spiritualism that allowed them to identify with that message-type music.

of mankind, it was directed at the intellectuals." Maurice Bishop, Grenada's Prime Minister between 1979 and 1984 was known to have quoted President Reagan as saying, "the war is for the minds of mankind. Ideological politics will prevail ... A campaign to capture the intellectual elite through the media of radio, television, books, articles and pamphlets, fellowships and prizes must be launched" (1984:199).

Dominica's intellectuals were not captured, but ironically, the majority emigrated to North America and Europe. Hounded out and branded communists, they were to leave behind the sediments of years of conscientization. But it did not seem this way to the pro-government publication *Dominica: A Pictorial Passage*. According to its publishers "Para Riviere, an early socialist revolutionary of the 70's, quit the fight after the people spoke through Grenada" (1988:35). The publishers will disagree that in 1990 the voices of the people are silenced by the authoritative words and images that dominate all the organs of communication and discussion by society, from the newspaper to Parliament. They will also disagree with the observation that today Dominica lacks what Riviere called "revolutionary leadership" (1981a:381) among its young men particularly. The vacuum created by the migration of Dominica's most critical thinkers was reflected most clearly by "Yakima" the sole female voice on *Explosion 91: Calypso Alive and Singing*. "Yakima's" 1991 composition *Woman Working De Pants* reveals a city-wide intellectual, moral and cultural poverty. She sings,

Speaking on behalf of Caribbean women  
There are a few things we want to say  
Since the plight of the Caribbean  
Depend on the young men of today  
The so-called leaders of tomorrow  
They are expected to set the pace

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<sup>9</sup> Nettleford was indeed correct when he told media practitioners in Barbados "now that we have dared to be independent we must pay the price for such insolent assertion. Independence, let us face it has only recently become part of the Caribbean heritage, though the struggle for self-determination is probably the greatest and most enduring legacy bequeathed us by our forbears ... the things we can call our own are all rooted solidly in that struggle, that struggle to be ourselves on our own terms, even while pressures of conforming to another self, that of an external master, confronted us. Nowhere has this been more evident than in the battle by Europe and its extension, the United States, for our intellectual landscape" (1990)

*But mentally they so shallow*  
 They may well lead us to disgrace  
 For as women we want to move ahead  
 Through hard work and education  
 Young men taking dope going off their head  
 They doe have any drive or no ambition

#### CHORUS

Wake up my *brothers*, wake up  
 Is we wear de pants  
 Today you wearing de skirts  
 Wake up my brothers, wake up  
 Come show us women what you are worth  
 We have to turn the current around  
 Come play your part for that change to come  
 Get up from off your butts  
 And accept your role  
 Cause if you don't show any interest  
 Or if you succumb to laziness  
 Then shut you mouth when we women take control (eniphasis mine).

Dominica at the dawn of the 1990s lacks an organized intellectual community. The shallowness which disturbs "Yakima" is a product of the present ideological environment. Part of that changing environment was identified in the mid-1980s by then Chief Cultural Officer, Alwin Bully.

The customs and traditions which have been handed down from parent to children over generations are being dismissed by many in the present generation as ridiculous vestiges of an irrelevant past, interesting only to tourists. The electronic world of cinema, TV and pop music, encourage us to be passive viewers, living out the lives of others waiting for shows and entertainment to come, rather than going out to be active participants involved with the creation and spontaneity of our traditional folklore.<sup>10</sup>

The consumption patterns of the population have changed, albeit under different conditions. It is very likely that Dominica's present finance minister, like the finance minister of 1975, is disturbed not only by the country's high food import bill, but by the North American ideas which accompany the changing consumption patterns. Gregory Rabess, addressing a group of parents and teachers of one of Dominica pre-schools, asked

What kind of models do we promote? We buy a birthday cake for our children designed like Superman. Shouldn't we get a cake designed like a Sisserou parrot or

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<sup>10</sup> Introduction to Allan Gamble's *Chanté Dominitjen*. 1986. Roseau: The Dominica Institute.

some other Dominican image. The toys we buy our children promote violence and are indeed dangerous. Others promote foreign heroes and role models like GI and Rambo ... these children are in fact getting into deeper trouble (1990:13).

That openness which has come to the Dominican society as a result of increased communication by road, air, shipping, telephone and cable television has not only thrown the society into a *utopic* state, but has restricted its notion of development to an alignment with metropolitan values and aspirations<sup>11</sup> which find support in the political and economic direction of the ruling forces.

In the 1970s British tastes and outlooks were the norm among the elite. Today, North American values both disturb their British sensibilities and give wings to their thoughts of liberation from Communism, Marxism and Leninism. When in the 1970s the Civil Service was structured along the lines of the colonial government today the good news of organizational management and communication seeks to transform the latent resistance of the work force in the public and private sectors. *Efficiency*, punishment and reward are fundamental to that process. Big business, big corporations, high fashion, prepackaged domesticated culture and mindless television constitute the control environment with trade unions counted as intervening variables. Dominica is certainly in need of an intellectual reunion.

### Political Economy and Communication

Television programs cross the island. Electricity has now reached once dark villages

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<sup>11</sup> Further excerpts from Rabess' address to parents and teachers of the St. Alphonsus Pre-School helps clarify the point concerning values and aspirations. He said, "Dominica at this time is facing a cultural crisis. Never mind the fact that we have a relatively strong folk culture compared to our neighbours and lots of activity around National Day celebrations. Our Dominican culture is fast taking a back seat as our people adopt foreign cultural values, styles and fashions, particularly that of North America." (Does this line of thought, not Rabess, sound like the finance minister in his 1975 budget address?). "Do we raise our children so that they develop a taste and liking for local foods, fruits and juices at an early age, or do we take them down the road of Kool-aid, soft-drinks, corn curls, candy and sweets? Do we teach them to speak Kwéyòl along with English, teach them Kwéyòl songs, traditional dances, beat the Bèlè drums? Do we tell them stories and kont/listwè?" (1990:13).



and hamlets,<sup>12</sup> and banana farmers with their Japanese-made vehicles, each week line the streets leading to banana depots while hucksters travel down and up the islands selling tons of produce. The opening up of real estate areas has facilitated the construction of semi-urban residences. The financial accountability of government is yet to be questioned.

The nation has advanced from the days of poor roads and limited port<sup>13</sup> and communication facilities. In the 1980s there was an increasing sense of self-confidence which represented a departure from the ideological environment nurtured both by the restrictions of colonialism and the government of the 1970s. Opportunities no matter how limited were made available to the people in education, small loans, access to farming materials and markets, sanitation and health care.<sup>14</sup> And the critical and communal tradition of the 1970s was buried by an advancing individualism, forcing "Bouteille" in 1991 to call on the people to "slow down on this thing called pride" (*Lean on My Shoulder*).

It was Stuart Hall drawing on the works of Antonio Gramsci, who said that hegemony should encompass "the critical domains of cultural, moral, ethical and intellectual leadership" (1986a:17). Hegemony is not exercised in the economic and administrative fields alone. This abiding disarticulation between the economic and the moral, intellectual and cultural may be a reflection of the fragmented strengths of the alliance of systems which came against the historic block of the 1970s. This is a point of departure for fruitful research. Suffice it to say

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<sup>12</sup> Headline in *The New Chronicle* of August 15, 1990. "90% of Population Have Electricity".

<sup>13</sup> In June 1990 *The New Chronicle* reported that the port facilities were to be further improved with "US 7 million in local funds to be spent on the project. When completed, the expanded area will have two extra berths for ships and the container park is expected to accommodate 30 feet containers stacked four feet high ... the contractors are Misener Marine of Tampa, Florida" (June 27, p. 1 emphasis mine).

<sup>14</sup> "Caribbean politicians," says Brown, "tend to be constrained to place greater emphasis on high-visibility projects than on the less visible, but no less crucial, social dimensions of 'development'. Hence the technological (Physical) bias in the way 'development is conceptualized in the region" (1986:5).

that it was likely that on disintegration the *unity* was revealed to be not the making of the political party which led the civil uprising, but the people who brought their various strengths to bear on the process of economic and political resistance. Such an excitingly contradictory environment in the 1980s threw up Calypsonians from the city and the country.

Among them was "Hurricane" from the semi-urban hamlet of Fond Colé. A second look at Illustration One will show the issue most vehemently attacked by "Hurricane" when he sang that labour leaders had "gone soft". He was referring to the drop in Trade Union activity in Dominica, the poor levels of representation received by working peoples and the general lack of creativity displayed by the unions. Our major question is whether the unions were aware of their role in the control environment and did they, like the Kadans Musicians withdraw the level of criticism which characterized their posture to the political directorate in the 1970s. Lawrence Nurse has much to say about trade unions in that new environment. Nurse argues that

[T]rade union leaders and their constituencies must be realistic about the nature of the environment within which their strategies for change are to be implemented, as well as the forces that lurk to conspire against their success. This is particularly crucial in the context of the reality of obstructionist oppositional politics that derive from the adversary social relationships which exist under capitalism and affect industrial relations practice itself (1986:139).

What was the environment within which the unions were asked to withhold resistance? Here was a nation emerging from ten years of intense political and economic resistance, a nation regarded by the regional and international community as unstable and volatile. The unions agreed to government's request for restraint and cooperation. By 1983 Eugenia Charles was congratulatory. Speaking of the unions, she said

[T]hey have cooperated in the furtherance of our efforts to show the world that we are a proper location for business enterprises ... we have sought to further protect the worker by careful amendments to the Industrial Relations and other social legislation.

The trade unions granted the government a moment of respite in the hope of fostering stable industrial and commercial development. But the unions began to slip into complacency, stifling the militancy of the workers. It was Michael Manley who said that unions do not necessarily

challenge the system itself, "but often act as fundamental props to capitalism by diverting fundamental short-comings and inequities of what is for all practical purposes, a morally bankrupt way of life" (1977:222). Not so the Calypsonians. When the Civil Servants, key instruments in the downfall of John, were not being paid their wages due by the Charles administration, "Dino" called on the government to *Pay Me And Vex With Me* (Illustration One). In effect while the unions were prepared to accede to the economic demands of the Charles administration, the Calypsonians were to deal with the adversary social relations which the unions agreed to permit in the name of development. Development also implies justice.

There are developments in the Dominican society that the unions are unable to deal with. One of those developments in the 1990s was the increasing cost of telephone services coupled with government's decision to jointly own Cable and Wireless, the British telephone company. While the National Workers Union, the representative of the workers at Cable and Wireless could call on government to reveal the nature of its shares, it could not lead the population in a general protest over the rising costs of services. It was "Hurricane", an employee of the company, who protested the increasing costs. The fact that the costs of those utilities continued to rise unchecked indicated to "Hurricane" that government had given the companies *autonomy*.

Talking about a press is Cable and Wireless  
 Now looking not far below is DOMLEC and DOWASCO<sup>15</sup>  
 Now de rich and de poor  
 Deir voices raise in uproar  
 De rates we paying for phone is cause for concern  
 Even for water and lights we paying a ridiculous price  
 Cost of living in this country already isn't easy  
 Now we going crazy for basic utility.

#### CHORUS

Oh God Almighty they killing we  
 They think we must be shaking a money tree  
 Now de government done give them autonomy  
 So they using this advantage mercilessly

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<sup>15</sup> DOMLEC - Dominica Electricity Company.  
 DOWASCO - Dominica Water and Sewerage Company

Oh Lord we pray, somehow, someday  
 Relief will come our way  
 Salaries small we tired bawl  
 They pressing our backs against the wall  
 Oh God Almighty look down on we  
 Give we de people a victory  
 If our leaders don't intervene  
 Den I say no way, no way  
 We vote them again.

In this 1990 composition entitled *Utilities*, "Hurricane" through the function of **synthesis** sought to break down complex socio-economic issues and make them accessible to the masses. By seeking to open gaps in the dominant economic discourse he adopted the function of **rupture** and looked forward to the day when all the people would be free from economic exploitation - the **convocation to meet**. "Hurricane" was not loved by the hegemonic forces.

What is not known by the consumers of that service is its tremendous advantages to capital. Herbert Schiller writing on the issue of privatization in the international telecommunications economy notes that the communication services are of indisputable advantage to capital, but are also capable of affording benefits to the general public, including the least advantaged groups in the nation (1988:30). These instruments of modernization also facilitate adaptation to an international economic order. The increased telecommunications traffic "has also been caused by social and economic needs for direct contact between persons, firms and public authorities as well as by technological improvements in facilities" (MacBride 1985:55). But the technology for facilitating those improvements is not produced by the people of the Caribbean, neither is the technology transferred exclusive of an ideological package. Indeed, it is in part, conformity to the ideology of those who produce and own the means of producing information technology which determines whether that technology, be it military or otherwise, is transferred and maintained. Dr. Marlene Cuthbert of the University of Windsor, Ontario took it further. Comparing the establishment of tele-communications links in the Caribbean in 1871 and the 1980s, Cuthbert noted that "then, as is typically the case now, the national self-interest of those who controlled the communications technology largely

determined the direction and nature of the links" (1987:27). Indeed, development demands structural changes in social relations and economic activity (Servaes 1989:49-50).

While the city-based industrial and commercial interests structure the information future of the society, farmers and peasants and squatters continue to extend the labour process both within and beyond the plantation, securing property rights and engaging in production of export crops on their own account. Did they in the early 1990s, sense that they were becoming "accomplices in their own exploitation" (Mattelart 1978:17), or were they part of a larger body of discontent? Calypsonian "Checker" sensed an alienation of the people by the political directorate and its economic corporate interests. Speaking directly to the Prime Minister he sang,

OECS unity that's your ambition<sup>16</sup>  
 But you have to make peace first with the nation  
 Segregation in a nation that's confusion  
 A divided house can never stand  
 Civil servants complaining  
 Police on the other hand bawling<sup>17</sup>  
 Daily paid workers just scrunting  
 We gave you the mandate that you could control  
 You said that you love this country  
 With your heart and soul  
 Just one seat majority you forget you love for we<sup>18</sup>  
 Now you have Dominicans in misery.

#### CHORUS

Now is the time to get together  
 Stop the victimization  
 And come down, come down and meet the nation  
 Twenty-one constituencies, how comes  
 Man eleven you can see  
 Come down, come down and meet the nation  
 We know that you feel the pressure  
*Rejected by banana farmers*

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<sup>16</sup> OECS is the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States. Eugenia Charles has been in the forefront for forging a unity among the smaller Windward and Leeward Islands.

<sup>17</sup> "Bawling" here means complaining.

<sup>18</sup> In the 1990 elections the Dominica Freedom Party won eleven of the twenty-one seats. In the 1985 election they had won sixteen. The Calypsonian sees this as a drop in the party's popularity.

But this is democracy that we have *down here*  
 Elections done come and gone  
 Stop the polarization  
 And come down, come down and meet the nation (emphasis mine).

Of the twenty-one constituencies contested during the 1990 elections the Dominica Freedom Party won eleven. The United Workers Party entered the election race in 1990. Unofficial reports indicated that the vast majority of the police officers voted in favour of the United Workers Party (UWP) in the 1990 elections. Eddison James, leader of the UWP is originally from the village of Marigot. Wins for the UWP came from the lucrative banana-growing communities of Marigot, Wesley, Castle Bruce and Morne Jaune/Riviere Cyrique. The Dominica Labour Party captured four of the other agricultural zones at Grandbay, Salybia, Petite Savanne and Portsmouth. The Dominica Freedom Party won all of the city constituencies in addition to the agricultural communities of Laplaine, Paix Bouche, Soufriere and Cottage.<sup>19</sup>

Stuart Hall reminds us that the masses think, that the commonsense of the masses is the terrain "on which more coherent ideologies and philosophies must contend for mastery: the ground which new conceptions of the world must take into account, contest and transform ..." (1986a:20). The Calypsonian "Checker" reveals that banana farmers, the rural lot, those whose culture was interpreted out of their existence as smallholding agriculturists rejected a government whose financial integrity was regarded as flawless and its regional and international reputation as unquestionable. There is no doubt that development requires economic unity and participatory democracy.

The voting communities which rejected the Charles administration were fundamentally rural and Kwéyòl-speaking. In the 1970s they were, in many cases, separated from the city

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<sup>19</sup> At Laplaine the Freedom Party won by 15 votes over the UWP. At Mahaut they won by 48 votes. At Paix Bouche the Freedom Party won by 18 votes and at Soufriere by 865 over the UWP. At Cottage the Dominica Freedom Party won by a slim 196 over the Dominica Labour Party. The Labour Party defeated the Freedom Party in the Wesley community, yet lost to the United Workers Party (*Dominica Official Gazette*. June 7, 1990, pp. 222-224).

by dilapidated roads, dangerous cliffs and precipices. They lived off the "ital" foods, told stories in the moonlight, saw the Rastafarians/Dreads as they traversed the hills and valleys. They were more likely to have received the intellectuals and activists. They were the ones whom the counter-hegemonic forces had to come to in order to explain the corrupt practices of the 1974-78 government, the implications of its laws and their role in the popular struggle. They were the lovers and interpreters of Kadans and Kwéyòl culture, the dancers and storytellers. Their way of life was grounded in reciprocity and sharing, not only of foods, ideas and festivals, but the broader element of meanings. To borrow from the words of John Fiske and Jon Watts, "they are not a passive mass. Their power to contest meanings enables them to find cultural formations through which they can speak and articulate their meanings" (1986:104). It could not be otherwise.

Government, industrial and commercial interests largely determine the news content of the national radio station. Though islandwide, television content continues to alienate viewers. The island's two remaining radio stations are religious and *objective*. Kwéyòl culture has successfully taken on a wider and formal dimension in dance, song and dress in schools islandwide. But its role as a pedagogic instrument<sup>20</sup> is overshadowed by its use as an instrument of celebration and thus its trivialization. In truth, domination may be achieved culturally and not always by violence and repression. When Joseph saw the grand opening for communication in Dominica through the Kwéyòl language, he was hoping that it would be integrated into the entire programming schedule and not slotted. It is integrated into the

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<sup>20</sup> The Komité Pou Etid Kwéyòl (KEK) has succeeded in compiling a Kwéyòl dictionary, manages a documentation centre, publishes *Kon Lanbi* and has initiated a Diploma in Kwéyòl Studies. The committee has received tremendous assistance from UNESCO with government as an intermediary. It has, however, expressed reservation about the nature of the present society. Writing on the collection of stories from senior citizens, KEK noted, "[T]heir often unique memories, of times past, if properly recorded have the potential to add considerably to the pool of historical data. Modern society poses a threat to the continuation of that process. Fast disappearing are the times when people gathered under the mango tree to hear stories and songs of days gone by. Television and radio are fast changing the scenario with imported programming introducing lifestyles, threatening to alienate the indigenous culture" (*Kon Lanbi*, May 1989, p. 1).

commercial schedule<sup>21</sup> where realism and social authenticity is required to generate demand.

But the Kwéyòl song and culture is as resilient as the Kadans Musicians, Calypsonians, Caribs, Dreads, intellectuals and activists, banana farmers, peasants,<sup>22</sup> and progressive trade unions. It may be commercialized but its roots spread deep in the minds and social relations of the people. In fact, even those who once regarded it with disdain now view it as "an essential tool in the general development and progress of our country" (Seignoret 1988:2).

When Gordon Henderson produced the refrain *twje yo* (kill them), the song almost transported a semblance of an entire 1838 society that Rabess described earlier, into 1987. The road march that year was not a Calypso. It was Kadans! The song referred to the disturbances at Vichy,<sup>23</sup> the subsequent disintegration of the French colonies and the fleeing of Guadeloupeans to Dominica. Applauding Dominica's hospitality, Henderson chanted,

Si ou ni kabwit twje yo  
Si ou ni mouton twje yo  
Si ou ni cochon twje yo

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<sup>21</sup> Today, apart from its use for advertising, Kwéyòl is in limbo on the national radio station. The Kwéyòl program, *Espéwéanse Kwéyòl* runs for one and a half hours between 2.00 p.m. and 3.30 p.m. One day of broadcasting on the Dominica Broadcasting Corporation could contain 132 commercials in sixteen hours and thirty minutes of programming. In 1986 24 commercials were slotted between 7:35 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. and the same number between 12:35 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. In 1988 the same number of commercials were run between 7:35 a.m. and 8:00 a.m., but, the commercials on *Espéwéanse Kwéyòl* had increased from zero in 1986 to 7 in 1988. In 1991 the figure has risen almost fifty percent.

<sup>22</sup> In addition to the solo efforts of Gordon Henderson, Ophelia Marie, Julie Mourillon, Fitzroy Williams, Chubby, and Jeff of Gramacks, the local troupes have continued to present the people's concern in Kwéyòl song and theatre. In the North the Clifton Capuchin Cultural Group staged a play entitled *Contraband*, exploring 'illegal' relations of their community with the neighbouring French department. The Salisbury Group on the West coast "raised the people's consciousness by highlighting the lack of a public convenience with a play called *Problem-Problem*" (*Kon Lanbi*, May 1989, p. 7). Paix-Bouche Group presented *Problem Té*, and the Grand Fond Group of the East produced *Listwe' Rosalie* (History of Rosalie and its big plantation). At base, therefore, the Kwéyòl culture thrives within rural communities while the city celebrates *Simenn Kwéyòl*.

<sup>23</sup> Robert Myers notes that "[A] food shortage was caused during the Second World War when several thousand Free French refugees fled to Dominica from Guadeloupe and Martinique, to escape the Vichy government and to take advantage of the Allies' guaranteed free-meal policy. The resulting protein shortage accentuated problems with malnutrition among rural Dominicans long after the war ended" (1987:xx).



Pou tout mon manjé

If you have goats kill them  
 If you have sheep kill them  
 If you pigs kill them, for everyone to eat.

Rastafari/Dread ideology which stated in the 1970s that meat was *deaders* was both imploded and exploded. Let's eat meat with our neighbours. Let's awake the instinct of hospitality! We have a long history with our French neighbours. Let's maintain it by being kind to them in times of need. This 1987 American sensibility should not prevent us from speaking Kwéyòl. In the words of Gordon Henderson, "anou palé Kwéyòl" ("let's speak Kwéyòl"). This *organization* of Carnival is taking away the spontaneity we know so well. Let's rebel, annoy, refute, let's be vicious and suggestive in our dancing!

Two forces were at work. Henderson drew from the past with what Rabess called a *lapeau kabwit* song (1989),<sup>24</sup> transcended the historic moment drawing it into the present with improved sound.<sup>25</sup> He maintained the bellaire rhythms, the call and response and the choruses. The Carnival revellers throughout Dominica literally went mad! The chorus *twje yo* moved beyond the two word combination, sunk in savage-sweet rhythm. When Gordon Henderson presented his song the folk culture of the past became the property of the present generations. All that was positive in the old was extrapolated and added to the new, enhancing the richness of cultural development as a whole.

The past lives within us, and can be tapped. In truth, the past, present and future can converge in a single moment. In the formal terms of Karl Jaspers, "when the *divine* appears all consciousness and reality are embraced in an enveloping wholeness" (O'Connor 1988:197), a Oneness, a unity of the subjective and objective, the secular and sacred.

This unity and tension of opposites is the essence of development and every phase of

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<sup>24</sup> *lapeau kabwit* means literally *goat-skin*, that is the material used for making the drum. At the musical base of *twje yo* was the *lapeau kabwit*.

<sup>25</sup> Recorded in Paris. Says Rabess, Exile One and other groups have produced songs based on *jing ping* and *lapeau kabwit* rhythms using modern electronic equipment.

development may represent a creative moment which modifies all previous steps and reevaluates them. There were attempts in Dominica to underplay the phase of the 1970s, but only the role and meaning of the economic, political, intellectual, cultural and moral processes of societal advance could be changed. And in their change there were further tensions, if not a resurgence of the inequalities which have dogged Caribbean societies for years.

The history of the Caribbean from the phases of plantation society has been a function of disarticulation. While the economic and political system functioned in tandem for the exploitation of the colonies and later independent states, the labour force was always alienated from the product. Today this alienation from the product has decreased and is replaced by a dependency on a foreign/external product. When once the student was alienated from the subject, today the student reads the works of Caribbean writers and thinkers, yet lives within an environment where his or her indigenous culture is secondary to a culture industry which propagates a superficiality anathema to the Dominican psyche. The resultant lurid escapism dares to destroy what cannot be destroyed, the culture.

To define culture as the entire way of life of a people is not to be concerned only about the generality of that definition, but it is to consider the very genesis of the people whose culture is being defined. And that volatile genesis in the Caribbean is often manifested in phases of political unity, economic well-being, intellectual freedoms, moral rectitude and cultural expression. But periodically, it is manifested in rebellions and revolts against the said phases of unity and harmony. Too often there is a hegemonic crisis. Too often the leadership which directed the alliance of systems is unable to answer to its promises when power has been secured. In the Dominica case, there was a full expression of political, economic and cultural resistance: the revolutionary spirit of the nation on the road to independence. But the role and meaning of those phases were transformed in the 1980s and beyond.

The intellectual phase of the 1970s is being buried deeply by the advancing consciousness industry. It is at this point that the Musicians and Composers should locate their

message, having as they do a long history of experience in resisting false consciousness. Indeed, Calypsonians will always continue to hit at the inequalities existent in the society. "Once you hear Calypsonians begin to lash a government, watch out!" (Norman "Ency" Cyrille 1990).

Kadans Musicians, the more creative lot have only transformed with time, knowing that the contradictions will continue to exist. They, along with the Zouk Musicians present a music form which captures the existing and potential cultural unity of Dominican and Caribbean people.<sup>26</sup> They constitute a movement for liberation not exclusively through their lyrics, but through the sheer power and origin of their music. Paradoxically, the thousands who dance at the live performances and discotheques to the highly amplified music of the Jamaicans, Trinidadians, Antiguan, Guadeloupeans, Haitians, Dominicans and Martiniquans, may not even realize that the music is of an African origin, albeit modified and enraged through technology!

Having returned to the essence of the African (religious) culture, the question as to what has not been dealt with surfaces. It would be of interest if another researcher were more specific on the uses of song lyrics by youth. Another question of interest would be how rural peoples regard city-composed Calypsos. It would be of interest to find out how television affected the advancement of Dominican women, particularly female Calypsonians. A comparative study could also be conducted between the uses of Kwéyòl in the 1970s and 1980s. It is hoped, however, that this attempt at placing lyrics within a political and economic context will provide greater methodological possibilities for Caribbean researchers in the areas of ethnomusicology, popular culture and communication.

At this point and consistent with our interests, the more fundamental question remains where is Dominica today and where will it be tomorrow. The population rejected a Socialist-inclined government and adopted a Capitalist-inclined one. Each contributed to the historical

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<sup>26</sup> For further readings on the Zouk movement see Jocelyn Guilbault's, "Zouk in the West Indies," In *Caribbean Popular Culture*. 1990, pp. 79-97.

process of development. Moral, intellectual, political and economic development no matter how fragmentary, were enshrined in two decades of intense sacrifice. The nation may be equipped for a great leap forward!

### Looking Ahead: CONCLUSION

The 1930s were years of political unrest in the Caribbean. Honeychurch reports that between 1934 and 1938 workers went on strike in Trinidad, St. Kitt's, St. Lucia, British Guiana and Jamaica. Riots breaking out in the islands exhibited a chain reaction. Dominica fought for constitutional change (1984:127). As the 1950s approached, the islands of the Caribbean sought to establish a united front, a sense of identity in their call for a federation. Though this ended in failure it represented another attempt at tapping into the potential of Caribbean people. In the 1970s a wave of protests, ideological positions and anti-colonial sentiments fanned the Caribbean. Reggae, Calypso and Kadans took root in the call for change, equal rights, justice, a sense of identity, respect for oneself and respect for national and indigenous cultures.

There appears to be a periodicity of crisis and relative stabilization between 1930, 1950, 1970. According to Johnson,

To think in those terms ... allows us to give a proportionate historical role to the living force of 70 to 80 per cent of historical populations. For at the base of every moment of challenge are the experiences of a working class, or groups of working people, trying to live their everyday lives under capitalism. What these lives are like, and how the mass of the people understand them, and how control enters into that understanding are therefore key themes for our history (1980:65).

Though writing of English social development, Johnson indicates the possibilities of a general application of his observations to peoples of a *less developed society*. With the notion of a U.S-engineered *new world order* emerging and Trinidad Calypsonian, David Rudder questioning whether the 1990s is just "a touch of the 60s all over again" (1990 1990)<sup>27</sup>, the nature of the present Caribbean political systems and the preparedness of the military, force us to reflect on

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<sup>27</sup> The song is entitled 1990.

the political, economic and social environment of the 1970s. Will events similar to those of the 1960s in North America recur in the 1990s and if they do, will they spill over into the Caribbean? This thesis will not seek to predict events, following on Rosenberg's counsel that "intelligibility, not prediction, is the mark of knowledge" (1988:111).

Nettleford took his cue from the Calypsonians and Reggae artists, whom he stated still believed in a society where human beings should live with dignity and social justice. And these artists in their struggle with the secular and sacred, the immanent and externalized, the objective and the subjective, developed an intelligibility which allowed them to map the advance of Caribbean societies. As macro-units these societies took on a pattern through history. The patterns of resistance would change from the 1970s to the 1980s in Dominica, so too would the methods of containment. But always, the struggle was one between classes over different ideologies. As participants in those struggles Musicians and Composers developed a particular sensibility which entailed not only an understanding of the real contradictions of the society, but the ability to transcend them. It was, therefore, not in a desire to predict that they composed but out of a comprehensive relationship with their environment.

Today they are faced with a society which has grown from its independence to present time, and demands a greater level of intelligibility. They must face a threatening anomie, a shallowness, a morality which does not equate the sensibilities and intelligence of people who have survived hundreds of years of enslavement, and an abiding tendency by political leaders to adopt force or other more covert methods to control alternative practices or ideas.

And even while the context out of which they composed and continue to compose is threatened, they remain committed to the struggle for justice and equality for the deprived. This alone is a force with its own dynamic. It is a force, which like the African (religious) culture respects no controls, no military might nor fortification.

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Honeychurch, Lennox (Historian)  
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John, Patrick (Prime Minister 1974-78)  
1990 *Interview*. September, Dominica.

Joseph, Denis (Radio Manager 1974-78)  
1990 *Interview*. September, Dominica.

Marie, Ophelia (Performer/Song-writer)  
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Mark, Philip "Chubby" (Kadans Musician)  
1990 *Interview*. September, Dominica.

Rabess, Gregory (Cultural Activist/Writer)  
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Williams, Fitzroy (Kadans Musician)  
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Williams, "Mico" Roosevelt (Calypsonian)  
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### (c) Songs

The following songs were extracted from discs made available to the researcher by the program director at the Dominica Broadcasting Corporation. "Gypsy's" *real name* is not known and "Grammacks" and "Milestone" are the names of Dominican groups. Except for Wailer and "Gypsy", the other singers/song writers and groups are from Dominica.

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Grammacks. *Cauchemar*, 1975.

Henderson, Gordon. *Which One Is Me Home*, 1975; *Rester A L'école*, 1975; *Twavay Pou Ayen*, 1976; *Twje Yo*, 1987.

Marie, Ophelia. *Aie Donmnik*, 1976.

Mark, Chubby. *Lwa K'Afekté Nou*, 1975; *Milk and Honey*, 1975.

Wailer, Bunny. *Rastaman*. Jamaica, 1974.

The following Calypsos were made available to the researcher by Philbert Alleyne. Alleyne tape-recorded most of the songs off radio, which has, from the early 1970s carried Calypso competitions live. Most of the songs of that period were not available at the Dominica Broadcasting Corporation. The tapes were destroyed in a 1979 hurricane. The 1990-91 songs were made available to the researcher by broadcaster Reggie Blanchard. Those songs were recorded by the Dominica Broadcasting Corporation for re-broadcast.

Bouteille. *Lean On My Shoulder*, 1990.

Dino. *Guns In De Cemetery*, 1976.

Liberator. *They Really Blind To See*, 1977.

Mico. *I Belong To Jehovah*, 1976.

Pickey. *Dear Dragon*, 1977; *Promises*, 1978.

Rabbit. *Ban*, 1990.

Robin. *We Want A Change*, 1976; *Independence*, 1977; *He Ain' Hard*, 1977.

Shakey. *I Want To Know*, 1977; *Dayba Pou Dayba*, 1977.

Spider. *Tell Me Why*, 1975; *Dear John*, 1977; *Mass Without Class*, 1977; *Psalm Of David*, 1978.

Zeye. *Tradesman*, 1976.

Copies of the above are deposited at the University of Windsor's Music Library.

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TABLE ONE

## Principle Domestic Exports

#	Main Items	1987	1988
		% of Tot.Exports	% of Tot.Exports
1	Bananas	71.1	70.4
2	Toilet Soap	10.1	9.0
3	Household Soap	7.4	8.2
4	Coconut Oil, Crude	1.1	0.9
5	Bay Oil	1.0	0.9
6	Plantains	0.8	0.9
7	Galvanized Sheets	0.8	0.5
8	Hot Sauce	0.6	0.4
9	Gloves	0.1	0.9
10	Garments	0.0	1.8
11	Grapefruit Juice Conc.	0.5	0.5
12	Grapefruit	0.4	0.8
13	Sweet Oranges	0.2	0.3
14	Prefab Houses	0.4	0.4
15	Paints & Varnishes	0.4	0.7
16	Vegetable Saps & Extracts	0.2	0.4
17	Spring Water	0.2	0.1
18	Other Water	0.1	0.2
19	Cut Flowers	0.1	0.2
20	Glycerol & Glycerol lyes	0.2	0.3
21	Tannias	0.2	0.1
22	Dasheen & Edoes	0.3	0.3
23	Other	3.6	1.8

Source: *Quarterly Bulletin of the Statistical Division*. Dominica, 1988-89.

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